

245 k 22

MISCELLANIES;

BY

JOHN ARMSTRONG, M.D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

L O N D O N,

Printed for T. CADELL, (Successor to
Mr. MILLAR) in the Strand.

MDCCLXX.

MISCELLANEOUS

JOHN ARTHUR LONDON

IN TWO VOLUMES



JOHN ARTHUR LONDON

THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

THE
CONTENTS
OF THE
SECOND VOLUME.

THE FORCED MARRIAGE,
A TRAGEDY *Page 1*

SKETCHES: OR ESSAYS ON
VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

By LAUNCELOT TEMPLE, Esq.

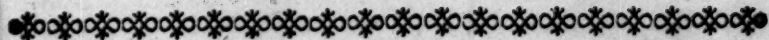
THE FIRST VOLUME.

<i>Preface</i>	<i>Page</i> 131
<i>Of Language</i>	133
<i>Of Genius</i>	134
<i>Of Taste</i>	136
<i>Of Turgid Writing</i>	139
<i>Of Affectation of Wit, and florid Writing</i>	141
<i>Of Obscure Writing</i>	144
<i>Of the modern Art of Spelling</i>	145
<i>Of New Words</i>	147
<i>Of Superannuated Words</i>	149
<i>Of Music</i>	152
<i>Of English Verse</i>	155
<i>Of the Versification of English Tragedy</i>	163
<i>Of Imitation</i>	167
<i>Of writing to the Taste of the Age</i>	169

<i>Of Physiognomy, or the Similitude between the Person and the Mind</i>	174
<i>Of Prejudices; political, religious, or national</i>	Page 177
<i>Of Moral Attraction and Repulsion</i>	184
<i>Sentences</i>	186

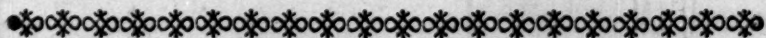
THE SECOND VOLUME.

<i>Of Business</i>	205
<i>Of Luck</i>	206
<i>Of Large Societies</i>	207
<i>Vox Populi Vox Dei</i>	210
<i>Of the Press</i>	212
<i>Of the Poor</i>	213
<i>An Anecdote</i>	215
<i>Of Fable and History</i>	219
<i>The Study of History</i>	221
<i>Of Fame</i>	224
<i>Of Revenge</i>	225
<i>Of Blasphemy</i>	226
<i>The Origin of Evil</i>	227
<i>Of Fascination</i>	231
<i>The Influence of Climate upon Genius</i>	233
<i>The Taste of the present Age.</i>	237
<i>Of the Dramatic Unities</i>	241
<i>Of Tragedy and Comedy</i>	243
<i>Of The Careless Husband</i>	246
<i>Of Gloomy Writing</i>	248
<i>Of a Line in Lucretius</i>	249
<i>Of the Goose-Phoenix</i>	250
<i>Of Singing</i>	251
<i>Of a Vulgar Error</i>	252
<i>Of some other Vulgar Errors</i>	254
<i>Of Civility</i>	256
<i>Sentences, Maxims, and Reveries</i>	259



THE
FORCED MARRIAGE,
A TRAGEDY.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR MDCCLIV.



VOL. II.

B



THE following Play, which was written chiefly with a view to expose a most cruel and absurd piece of tyranny too common in life, might have appeared upon the Stage many years ago: If the Author could have dangled after Managers; or have used the access he had been offered to the prostituted patronage of two or three *great* Men, to whose taste he did not chuse to appeal; or after all, if any but the two female characters could have been properly represented at the time when the piece was finished.

The SCENE,

A Hall in STRENI's Castle, in the Kingdom of
NAPLES.

THE
FORCED MARRIAGE,
A TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

STRENI, VICTORIA, *a Servant.*

STRENI.

GO, call her hither;—go!—your mistress, woman,
My hopeful daughter!

VICTORIA.

O not yet, my Lord.

You are too warm—indeed you are.

STRENI.

Well then,

I'll never see her more. Go tell her so.—

Away!

B 3

SCENE

6 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

SCENE II.

STRENI, VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Compose yourself, my Lord.

STRENI.

My daughter
To fly my house! to make herself and me
The public jest! 'tis monstrous!

VICTORIA.

But, my Lord—

STRENI.

Fly from her own good fortune to a nunnery!
She should have pin'd her life out there, amongst
The peevish sisterhood. — But I'm too gentle;
I've been too kind a parent; that's my fault,
And I deserve this. —
Had I been stern, as many fathers are,
She durst as well have leapt the battlements
As stolen this flight.

VICTORIA.

'Tis true, my Lord, you have been
A tender father; and my cousin knows it.

STRENI.

A TRAGEDY.

7

STRENI.

The day too fixed—and with her own consent—
The match above her proudest hopes—a prize
Scarce to be dreamt of!—Death and distraction!
This luckless wretch's flight will ruin all!
O God! O God!

VICTORIA.

Nay, never fear the Count.
He'll hardly flinch, his love's too obstinate
For that; I'll answer for his constancy,
As little as I know him.

STRENI.

What dost thou say,

VICTORIA? Yes, there's comfort in that thought.—
All may be well yet, think'st thou?—I'm glad, however,
This rash young Hector has not swept her off.
She's here, she's safe; and all my fears from him
Are gone: thank heaven for that!—My dear VICTORIA,
What wouldst thou say? thou hadst something to impart—
Come, speak.

VICTORIA.

My Lord, I know not what to say:
You're grown so choleric that I dare not speak.

B 4

You

8 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

You did not use to be thus. I remember
When, without fear or thinking twice, I durst
Give all my follies their full play before you.
But this unwonted rage quite frightens me ;
It checks my utterance : yet, what need I fear
Lest ought too careless should escape my tongue,
When I'm not heard ?

STRENI.

Forgive me, my VICTORIA.

You see how grievously I am provoked.
Anger forgets good manners ; pardon me :
I now am calm, I am myself again.
Speak what thou wilt, as unrestrained as ever.

VICTORIA.

I shall offend.

STRENI.

Fear not. If thou hast ought
That burns within here, boldly give it vent.
I am not yet I hope so peevish grown
As to take fire at any friendly freedom.
I know thou meanst us well.

VICTORIA.

Heaven knows I do.

STRENI.

A TRAGEDY.

9

STRENI.

Then freely speak thy mind.

VICTORIA.

Well then, my Lord,
Since I have leave to speak, and may be heard;
This marriage — must it be?

STRENI

It must, VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

In earnest?

STRENI

Surely.

VICTORIA.

Then I'm sorry for it.

And, STRENI, tho' to contradict your wisdom
May misbecome my sex, still more my years;
Yet in OLYMPIA's cause I will be plain,
And right or wrong declare my inmost thoughts.
Two sisters bore us; but I love OLYMPIA
More for her sweet and generous qualities
Than all these ties of blood. At your command
I come to see the nuptial rites performed:
But if her mind is so averse, I'd rather
Weep at her funeral, tho' my heart should break.

STRENI.

STRENI.

You cannot think I love my daughter less
Than you, VICTORIA; or less know her interest.
What other motive than paternal love
Could make me urge this marriage?

VICTORIA.

Urge a marriage!

That rigid tie which death alone dissolves!
That bold decisive step, which fixes us
In happiness or misery for ever!
That state which is a lottery at the best,
But ventured on with coyness and reluctance
Has little chance to prosper! All things else
To this are trifles, and not worth disputing.
Prevent a giddy marriage when you can;
But never urge the wisest.

STRENI.

How you dictate!

But I have told more years than you, have seen
A little more of life too; and 'tis hard
If old experience has not taught me something.
'Tis strange if passion, prejudice, and youth
Decide more soundly than deliberate reason,
That sees the objects in dispute divested

Of

A TRAGEDY.

11

Of false lights and infatuating fogs.
Pray, of two judges qualified so differently,
Which is the likeliest to determine right?

VICTORIA.

Doubtless, my Lord, the judge who sits serene
Above all mists of passion. But where is he?
Youth has its follies: and when these decline,
A passion springs, they say, that blinds the soul
As much as that gay dotage Love itself.
A certain flower of winter!—Fy upon it!—
They call it —— Avarice.

STRENI.

You're a saucy girl,
And always was so: that pretty head of thine
Has too much pertness in it.

VICTORIA.

Pardon me,
My Lord; but either now, or henceforth never
Can I with any grace or decency
Claim those bold licences your goodness used
T' indulge me in. Suppose you now at play
With a Piedmontese sharper; one that had broke
An hundred banks; a dextrous knave that cheats you
At every throw: and I a looker on.
Should it offend you, if by a wink or hem,

Or

12 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Or pinching of your arm, I gave you hints
 Of this accomplish'd villain ? My Lord, my Lord,
 This common cheat, this hankering after more,
 Betrays the wisest to strange weakneses.
 How else could this e'er happen ? STRENI's daughter,
 Rich STRENI's only child, has made (and not
 Without her father's warrant too) a fair
 Exchange of hardly-violable vows, with
 A youth whose qualities and accomplishments
 Equal his noble birth. Heaven ! what should hinder
 Such lovers to be happy ? — A richer man,
 Better allied, of finer dispositions
 Or parts, I dare not say — but surely older,
 Steps in ; and STRENI, never famed for blundering,
 The foundest judge of other men's proceedings,
 Prefers his suit ; th' indulgent father grows
 A tyrant, where he least should use his power.
 It is so strange, I shall believe in witchcraft !
 'Tis plain infatuation !

STRENI.

Surely older !

Ay, there's the crime no merit can atone for.
 Better be rash, hot-headed, passion's slave ;
 Better be mad, and young ; than old with all

Th' ad-

A TRAGEDY.

13

Th' advantages that can consist with years.

Yet CLAUDIO's not so very old.

VICTORIA.

No, not

Much turned of fifty.

STRENI.

Be it as you will ;

He is for pleasing manners, even for person,

A more engaging man than fifty such

As those whom youth and folly recommend

To ruin half your sex.

VICTORIA.

You think him so, my Lord.

But does OLYMPIA think so? that's material.

Taste is so various, what engages one

Disgusts another : and 'tis vain to dictate

To this despotic principle of nature.

Yet, if it must be so, you should prescribe

Where I shall live, and how ; what I shall wear ;

Even what companions shall engross my time

For days, for weeks, for months ; tho' this might prove

A cruel trespass on my native freedom ;

But let my friend for life, my fortune's lord,

On whom depends my bliss or misery,

Be of my own approving : here at least,

14 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

In this one instance may my choice be free.

I have seen the Count, and—

STRENI.

Well, what think you of him?

VICTORIA.

My Lord, I must not touch irreverently
A character that boasts your good opinion :
I dare not tamper with such sacred things.
Besides I'm but a woman, and a young one ;
And to be critical in ought but dress
Or dancing would not suit me. But, if you please,
I'll tell you what some, who pretend to judge
And think they know him, say.

STRENI.

Well, what? Come on.

What do they say, good cousin?

VICTORIA.

First, they praise

His person ; which they say is, for his years,
Specious enough ; tall, jovial, sleek and blooming,
As if 'twere May still. Nor is his mind, they say,
Less youthful ; for he's charmingly facetious ;—
As far as mere corporeal jollity
Is wit and humour ; but it seems no further.

For

For tho' he has laughed incessantly these forty years,
'Tis strange, he has never blundered out one joke !
For his parts they say but little : that may be envy.
And yet they own that, from sagacious selfishness,
And want of heart, he has cunning and deceit
Enough t' outwit ten cardinals ; for beneath
An open, frank, unguarded-like behaviour,
A shew of smooth and dimpling innocence,
It seems he hides a quicksand : and they say
He has earned his wealth as boldly as confists
With honest policy, and a just regard
For his own precious head.

STRENI.

A bold free hand
To sketch a character out ! The only thing
That's wanting here is likeness.

VICTORIA.

Nay, my Lord,
I only tell you what report says of him ;
If that belies him 'tis no fault of mine.
I have heard indeed, that his manner, from facetious,
Is grown of late embarrass'd and half sad :
That he looks pensive, talks to himself, and when
He laughs, it seems an effort to disguise

Some

16 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Some secret grief; which looks mysteriously
To those who mark him. But the cause is plain:
'Tis love, 'tis foolish love, makes him so grave.—
A hopeful youth to grow love-pensive!—Lord!
I long to see him languish! It must be charming
To see him languish for a Lady's fortune!

STRENI.

Fortune! What's that to him, whose ample means,
Raised by his gallant service in the war,
From the sad ruins of an ancient seat,
Vie with the Princes of proud Italy?
What can a moderate portion add to him
So opulent, and yet without an heir?
If fortune were his aim he could have choice
Of richer matches; but he loves OLYMPIA;
He best deserves her; and she shall be his,
Or else no child of mine. Besides, this spark,
This *youth* you so much boast of, by report
Ere now has found another bride.

VICTORIA.

Be that
As it may happen. But, alas! my Lord,
Must all the joys and comforts of her life
Be fondly sacrificed to this ambition,

None

None of her own besides, to give an heir
 To———were it the first house in Italy?
 But if there be such charms in possibly
 Bringing a boy, who possibly may live
 T' inherit a great fortune, wear high titles,
 And yet perhaps be neither great nor happy;
 OLYMPIA, blest with every grace of nature,
 With fortune's bounties, and your daughter too,
 So young, may wait till other matches offer
 More to her mind, perhaps as much to yours.
 Nineteen is surely not a desperate age;
 'Tis even too young to be unplum'd into
 That tame domestic creature called a Wife,
 And quit the careless pleasures of the world.
 Nay, 'tis not decent at these years to grow
 A sober matron.

STRENI.

How thou ramblest on!—

But I am old, my child; I have not long
 To live, not many years; and 'tis my wish,
 My favourite aim, before I die, to see
 My daughter settled in a solid state
 Of happiness. That done, my rest of life

18 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Becomes a holiday, that chearful calm
Which age delights in: and I shall——

SCENE III.

STRENI, VICTORIA, *a Servant.*

SERVANT.

My Lord,
There's one just now arrived with some dispatches
He has rode all night to bring you.

STRENI.

I'll see him presently.
Go tell OLYMPIA that this Lady here
Expects her company.

SCENE IV.

STRENI, VICTORIA.

STRENI.

My dear VICTORIA,
I'll leave you to your cousin's entertainment
A little while.

VICTORIA.

I'll go myself and find her.

SCENE

SCENE V.

VICTORIA.

Who could believe this good old man, so easy
So gentle otherways, should in this case
Prove so inflexible ! But here comes OLYMPIA. —
Alas, how altered ! —

SCENE VI.

VICTORIA, OLYMPIA.

VICTORIA.

Ah, my dearest cousin ! —
Come, we're alone.

OLYMPIA.

Welcome to my sad heart ! —
What need have I of such a cordial fight !

VICTORIA.

Poor dear OLYMPIA ! — How catching are thy tears ! —
Thy griefs are mine. Would I could bear them for thee !

OLYMPIA.

How I have long'd to see my only friend,
My kind companion ! — Now she comes too late ;
For I'm undone for ever !

C 2.

VICTORIA.

THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

VICTORIA.

It must not be :

All is not lost yet. — Bless me ! thy hands burn mine —
Thou art not well.

OLYMPIA.

Ah ! did you know, VICTORIA,
What I have suffered since we parted last,
You'd wonder that this mortal frame so long
Could bear such misery.

VICTORIA.

Come, dry thy tears.

The worst is past. — Your father will relent :
He needs must yield at last.

OLYMPIA.

Oh ! never, never ! —

To-morrow, for ought that yet appears, compleats
My wretchedness.

VICTORIA.

Good Heaven ! it must not be.
What ! be engaged by force in vows so solemn !
'Tis madness to suppose it.

OLYMPIA.

Either it must be so,
Or I must live an out-cast in the world,

With

With all my father's curses on my head. —
That's my hard sentence.

VICTORIA.

Never till this moment

Have I once dreamt what happiness it was
To own a little fortune uncontroll'd
By any human caprice. — 'Tis thine, OLYMPIA! —
Heavens! We shall be the happiest two that live! —
I say 'tis thine!

OLYMPIA.

My generous kind VICTORIA!

But can I bear my father's fix'd displeasure? —
Tho' to my daily grief I have found of late
His tenderness estrang'd, I am not yet
So harden'd with unkindness to endure
To lose his smiles for ever.

VICTORIA.

That fear is vain.

Your father is not of so stern a make.
He cannot tear you from his heart; in him
Nature defies it: this severity
Is but put on, and costs him many a pang,
No doubt, to urge you to what he conceives
Your greatest happiness. — But I long, OLYMPIA,
To hear the whole of thy disastrous tale.

For this long absence of two years, while all
 Intelligence has been shut up between us,
 Has kept me still in painful ignorance
 Of what has past. The general part indeed
 I know too well ; but for particulars
 All I have learnt is merely from report ;
 Whose specious lies discredit every truth
 It chances to throw out. I left you blest
 In the gay spring of love. A view more charming
 Of all that's sweet in th' harmony of souls
 Was never seen : your father too then seemed
 To hold ALPHONSO as his own ; as one
 Soon to become his son-in-law.

OLYMPIA.

'Tis true :

And till my father had disclosed his mind,
 To give a sanction to ALPHONSO's vows ;
 Whatever tenderness possess'd my soul,
 I let it fondly prey upon itself ;
 My eyes ne'er told it, and much less my tongue.
 I hid my conscious blushes as I could,
 My fault'ring speech was virgin bashfulness,
 And if I trembled 'twas alarm, not love.
 Oh ! I could burst, and on thy friendly bosom
 Breathe out my soul, VICTORIA, to remember

The

A TRAGEDY.

23

The dear enchantments of those happy days !
It was a sweet disease, a charming dream,
And but a dream, of happiness. At last
We were contracted by the mutual will
Of both our parents ; and a distant day
Fix'd for the nuptials ; when, alas ! —

VICTORIA.

I know

This CLAUDIO saw you ; this rich Count : would he
And all his millions in a mine had been
Blown to the Moon, that luckless hour he came
Blundering to blast such hopeful buds of joy !
How I could curse him ! — But my dear OLYMPIA,
I interrupt your story.

OLYMPIA.

Alas ! my father,
Dazzled with CLAUDIO's wealth, and by his arts
Of most immoderate shameless flattery won,
Grew cold to poor ALPHONSO ; by degrees
Chang'd his familiar cordial entertainment
To dry civility, and shocking ceremony :
Seized every opportunity to lessen him
In my affections, and to recommend
A stranger to my breast. 'Twas all in vain.

C 4

How

How could I hear him ? Was it possible
 To shift the pure devotion of my heart
 From lov'd ALPHONSO to a golden idol ?
 Nay, to th' old object of ALPHONSO's hate ? —
 I own I ne'er attempted it. But from
 That adverse time the fortune of our loves
 Has still declined ; and (strange fatality !)
 Soon after this another cross event
 Confirm'd the former. —

VICTORIA.

How ?

OLYMPIA,

One night at court,
 In the full splendor of a birth-day crowd,
 A vain pert fool, a minion of the King's,
 A coxcomb drunk with favour, snatch'd my hand
 And rudely kiss'd it ; such confusion seiz'd me
 I had almost sunk : ALPHONSO, who was by,
 Forgetful of the reverence of the place
 And the King's presence, with one desperate blow
 Laid the plum'd courtier sprawling on the floor :
 And for that hasty generous fault was banished
 From Naples to Palermo, for a twelvemonth.

VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Banish'd! Heaven's patience! Had he failed to do it
 He had merited eternal banishment;
 From Naples, Italy, from every land,
 From all society where honour's thought of,
 Had I been King th' ill-manner'd fool who gave
 The first offence, and brought the other on,
 (Which was at worst a noble rashness) should
 Have bore the punishment alone.

OLYMPIA,

The King,

On due submissions offered by ALPHONSO,
 'Tis thought would freely have revoked the sentence,
 But for the secret practices of some
 Who wish'd his absence. Those dark dealings made
 All intercession vain; tho' for my sake
 He stoop'd to more than otherways, I know,
 His generous pride would have consented to.—
 No remedy: he must depart, and leave me
 A widowed bride; tho' first he press'd the nuptials,
 He claimed my hand: that was denied; my father
 Found some prudential reasons to excuse it
 Till his return. ALPHONSO warmly urged
 A private marriage: this my filial duty
 Forbade; tho' else, with all my soul, I would

Have

26 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Have been the partner of his banishment,
 Not to Palermo, but to any desert,
 To Nature's wildest solitudes; I owed it,
 Could ought be dismal where ALPHONSO was,
 To him who owed his banishment to me.
 It was a mournful parting: one sad year
 Appeared an age; and till that age expired
 Our only view of consolation was
 Such intercourse as separates from the dead
 Our absent friends. — But since that cruel day
 Not one short letter —

VICTORIA.

How? That's strange, OLYMPIA!

OLYMPIA.

'Tis no such wonder. For this generous exile,
 The hardly-used ALPHONSO, scarce had left
 The gates of Naples, when my father hurried me
 Down to these ancient melancholy walls,
 Remote from Naples and all neighbourhood.
 The real aim of this retreat, as from
 Th' event appears too plain, was to cut off
 All correspondence with ALPHONSO, and those
 That might promote intelligence between us;
 While this insidious rival should be favoured
 With all advantages to undermine

My

My absent love. For ever since I have known
This sad retirement, this confinement rather,
My correspondence has been strictly watched
Like one in gaol for treason. No company
This twelvemonth have I seen but CLAUDIO,
And those who with his odious praises chafe
My persecuted ears. I have been afraid
Of every morning's light; for every day
Has seen me flattered, threatened, and cajoled,
Tortured and teized, to what I most abhor.
What's worse than these, strange fancies haunt my mind,
And jealous cares pursue me, that my breast
Pants with perpetual terrors and alarms.
My health in sickly languor pines away:
Kind sleep forsakes me; and when harass'd Nature
Sinks in imperfect rest, distracted dreams,
Worse than my waking miseries, shake me from
My frightened slumbers. Gracious Heaven defend me!
'Tis horrible to think how near the verge
Of madness I have been.

VICTORIA.

Alas, OLYMPIA!

What blasts have shook thy gentle soul! But Heaven
And thine own fortitude will still support thee
To baffle all their rage.

OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

My fortitude !

Alas ! my little share of that, VICTORIA,
Has failed me already ; fatally has failed me.
For tired with endless teizing, glad to gain
Some respite from the present pain, at last
I promised in the weakness of my mind,
That if within three days beyond the term
In which ALPHONSO's banishment expir'd,
He did not claim my plighted faith, I should
Resign my hand to CLAUDIO. This I thought
Was no great venture. For tho' no letters came,
I hoped I knew the cause ; nor would I doubt
ALPHONSO's faith, and purpose not to lose
One day of liberty in absence from me ;
These I remember were his words at parting,
But, ah VICTORIA ! would that doleful year
Was yet not ended, that I still might hope !

VICTORIA,

Is it then past ?

OLYMPIA.

Two days since : and to-morrow
Decides my destiny.

VICTORIA.

But is there ought

In

A TRAGEDY.

29

In this, that at his father's instigation
ALPHONSO has commenced a nuptial treaty
With a Sicilian Lady ?

OLYMPIA.

Such a rumour
Has, since that promise was extorted from me,
Been so industriously rung in my ears,
And managed with such arts and aggravations,
It seemed, when the first shock was past, a fiction
Contriv'd to shake my faith, and drive me in
A hurry of resentment to my ruin.
But by your looks you seem to apprehend
'Tis something more—Perhaps you've heard he's married.
For Heaven's sake do not flatter me, VICTORIA.
If it is so tell me.—— Ah !

VICTORIA.

Nay, dear OLYMPIA,
I tell you all I have heard ; and that perhaps
Comes from the secret fountain-head of lies.
At least if such a treaty was confirmed
You might expect the earliest notice of it.
My life for't your intelligence in that
Would pass without much barr or scrutiny.

OLYMPIA.

That's all my little comfort. But alas !

I know

30 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

I know not what to think of this delay.
 Sometimes my melancholy whispers me
 He has forgot or hates me, and in revenge of
 My father's flights has left me. At other times
 'That probity, that unaffected warmth
 Of love unchanged by shocking injuries ;
 Those generous manners, th' inviolable honour
 Which even his enemies admit, assure me
 He cannot be so base to quit me thus,
 Without some form at least of taking leave.
 Perhaps he has heard I'm married, and believes it ;
 Perhaps he is not well. — I'm all perplexity.
 This agony of suspense is perfect torture,
 From which, to know that fate had done its worst
 Would be a kind of desperate repose. —
 Should he prove faithless, I have done, VICTORIA,
 What you'll despise me for.

VICTORIA.

It cannot be.

You ne'er can stoop to ought that's really mean :
 But what, dear cousin ?

OLYMPIA.

As the time approach'd
 Which was to prove decisive of my fortune,
 My fears encreased ; my anxious throbbings grew

Quite

A TRAGEDY.

31

Quite insupportable; my fluttering breast
Could find no quiet. My restless brain at work
How to prevent the worst, at last I found
A trusty messenger to bear with speed
A letter to ALPHONSO; which explained
Whate'er was needful of my sufferings past
And fears of worse to come; and that if still
He loved and meant to claim me, the least delay
Might render that impossible. Ere this
I might have had some answer; but no news
Arriving, in despair last night I sought
Protection in a monastery that stands
Amongst the neighbouring mountains: there I pass'd
The anxious night; but thither traced, this morning
I was demanded by th' authority of
My father in his vassals.

VICTORIA.

But the sisters,
The Abbess, Heaven! how could they yield you up
So tamely? — their protection!

OLYMPIA.

Do not blame them;
They did their utmost for me. I was received
With manners most respectfully obliging,
With tears of sympathy, and fluttering care

32 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

To hide me panting from the hot pursuit.
 But as my sheltering place was soon discovered,
 'Twas more it seems than they could answer for,
 To brave my father's summons. — You see, VICTORIA,
 How every refuge fails me. A short time now
 Remains for me to hope. Yet something still,
 Whether the whisperings of some friendly power,
 Or the last effort of tenacious hope,
 Suggests to my sore mind that ere to-morrow
 ALPHONSO will be here. But come what will
 I shall not marry CLAUDIO ; that's determined. —
 I know one refuge from all misery —
 One cordial draught shall ———

VICTORIA:

What ? — Thy words are frightful ! —
 Heaven banish all such thoughts ! — Alas ! OLYMPIA,
 Thou lookst thro' the false glass of Melancholy.
 Trust me there's nothing yet so desperate here.
 Whate'er may happen lucklessly, the worst
 Is still avoidable. — You shall be sick —
 Or take another flight. — We'll fly together.
 I will secure you in a little fortress
 Which to the General himself in person
 Shall scarce surrender you at the first summons.
 There are a thousand shifts ; more than we yet

Can

Can think of. — But the time is precious :
Come let us hide ourselves, and plot together.
'Twill be a charming triumph, if we two,
In half a day, at one unlooked-for blow,
Can dreadful schemes demolish, which to rear
Has cost much older heads a restless year.

ACT II. SCENE I.

STRENI.

What's to be done? Good God! these news confound me!
I cannot yet believe my eyes. Let me read
This letter again. — There's nothing in the world
But villainy and delusion: knaves and dupes
Maintain this foolish farce of human life. —
Let me see —

“ I am this moment informed that Count CLAUDIO is
“ accused of some embezzlements and other perfidious
“ practices during the late war, which render him ob-
“ noxious to the State; and that warrants are actually
“ issued out to apprehend him. I am sorry this piece
“ of news did not reach me till after my sister VICTO-
“ RIA's departure; but hope it will not come too late
“ to prevent your engaging in so fatal an alliance. At
“ least, whether my information prove true or false, I
“ thought myself obliged to give you this notice.” —

Well, this cuts deep indeed! There all my hopes
My flattering schemes lie blasted and o'erthrown.
The shock so stuns me that I yet scarce feel it.
Is it so then, CLAUDIO? Well, I find at last

This

'This world is all a cheat, and there's no trusting
To fair appearances.—Would this had happened
A twelvemonth sooner! what an anxious year
It would have saved me and my poor OLYMPIA!
Yet better now than a twelvemonth hence;—nay, than
To-morrow.—Bless me! how nearly have we 'scaped
The crush of this man's ruin!—It grieves my soul
When I look back on what my child has suffered,
And all for nothing. But, Heaven knows! whate'er
Was harshly managed was still kindly meant.
I long to lighten of a deadly weight
Her labouring breast, that flutters now with fear
T' approach me, and retards her trembling steps.
Could she but guess the purpose of my message
She 'd make more haste to meet me.—But she comes.

SCENE II.

STRENI, OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

I am ashamed to see my father's face:
But prostrate thus and breathless at his feet
I beg forgiveness.

D 2

STRENI.

STRENI.

Rise, OLYMPIA. Come,

Indeed it was not well.

OLYMPIA.

'Twas my despair

That did it. — Pardon me, my Lord — my father!

STRENI.

I do, my child, I do. You've never found me
 An unrelenting parent: or if ever
 I have given way to some austerities,
 My very tenderness provoked me to them,
 My eager care to see you happy.

OLYMPIA.

My father,
 You have been ever gracious, kind and tender;
 Your goodness still prevented all my wishes:
 And it has cost me many a painful throb
 To be reduced, by thwarting obligations,
 To act a stubborn part against your pleasure.
 I know your purpose is to make me happy:
 But what's all splendor and superfluous wealth,
 What's all the world, to dear content of mind?—
 My heart is not at my command: and yet
 So far I could controul it, that was there one

Dear

Dear as my soul—I never would, without
My father's sanction, change my vows with his :
There is but one thing you can urge and I
Not cheerfully yield to. Were your sacred life
To be redeemed with mine, oh ! I should fall
A willing victim : nothing there could combat
My filial duty. But to give the hand
To one while to another the heart's engaged,
Is something so profane, it looks so like
Base prostitution, that the more I think on't
The more it shocks me. — Still my honoured father,
Let me implore your grace—'Tis not too late
To save me from this violation.

STRENI.

My child,

I will no longer to thy delicacy
Oppose the steadiest purpose of my soul.
Indeed I'm sorry to have urged so far
A match that shocks thee. To-morrow is the day
Thou dreadst so much : but I would rather make
The greatest power on earth my deadly foe
Than thee unhappy.

OLYMPIA.

O my gracious father !

D 3

Tears

38 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Tears so o'erpower me that they choak my words—
But on my knees I thank you.—You're too good!

STRENI.

Come to my heart, my child : thou never wast
A stranger there, nor ever can'st thou be
While it has vital warmth.

OLYMPIA.

My dearest father,
This kindness makes at once a full amends
For all the griefs that I have ever known.—
I am too happy——

A SERVANT.

The Count, my Lord,
Is at the gates.

STRENI.

The Count!—what CLAUDIO?—well—
Conduct him in.—He comes betimes;—before
He was expected.—But—what ails my child—
Thou tremblest and grow'st pale!—Retire my child—
My poor OLYMPIA!—Well, 'tis plain enough
What all this hurry means. But soft and fair
Good Count! you come no further this way, Count,
Not one step further. You little know——

SCENE

SCENE III.

STRENI, CLAUDIO.

CLAUDIO.

Good morrow,
And many happy days, to good Lord STRENI.

STRENI.

The same to you, Count CLAUDIO.—Who'd believe it!

CLAUDIO.

You cannot wonder that I thus prevent
My happiest day: my love of dear OLYMPIA,
My warm ambition to be filed your son,
Might well account for that.—But I have news,—
No bad ones neither.—Guess, my Lord.

STRENI.

How should I?—

What mean you?

CLAUDIO,

Only this;—at last 'tis done
What we so long have laboured—ALPHONSO's married!
'Tis true—'tis past all doubt—I have sure proofs on't,
And now OLYMPIA stands absolved from all

D 4

Engage-

40 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Engagements there, which gives me double joy :
For it would damp all happiness to shock
Her scrupulous honour ; and indeed that thought
Has always check'd me—What! you're sad, my Lord,

STRENI.

I have some reason. I am quite heart-sick
Of ineffectual cares. I've done whate'er
Authority or gentle arts could do
To push this backward treaty, but find at last
'Tis all in vain. 'Twill never do, believe me.

CLAUDIO.

How's this, my worthy Lord? you quite amaze me!
I thought it had been fix'd.

STRENI.

It seem'd so ; but
I cannot force my daughter's inclinations.

CLAUDIO.

I hope they are not now less kind to me
Than when the happy day was named,

STRENI.

Indeed,
Not to amuse you with false complaisance,
I think they rather are ; for as the day
Draws nearer her reluctance grows more violent.

I cannot bear to see her agonies.
Could I compel her, as indeed I cannot,
I feel too much compunction in my breast
To use a power so tyrannous and unjust
Against my child. Nor would it suit your wisdom
To yoke your years with an unwilling bride.
And as your friend, my Lord, I would dissuade you
From further thoughts of this : extorted vows
Can never tend to happiness.

CLAUDIO.

I hope
I do but dream ! If not, your mind, my Lord,
Is strangely altered for the time. These difficulties
Till now have ne'er been thought of. But they're nothing:
For be affection e'er so coy, 'twill grow
At last with tender cherishing.

STRENI.

But its growth
Will not be forced. Let time and nature work.
Have patience. Let it rest. A short delay
Can breed no danger here. A month or two hence
Will do as well, or better.

CLAUDIO.

A month or two !

Heavens !

42 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Heavens ! that's an age to one who loves like me !—
No, no,—to-morrow—would it were to-day !

STRENI.

It cannot be to-day—nor yet to-morrow.

CLAUDIO.

How ! not to-morrow ? Ah ! by all that's tender
Let me insist on that, my dearest Lord.

STRENI.

Urge me no further.

CLAUDIO.

For your own sake, my Lord,
As well as mine, I must.—How will it sound ?
'Tis known——

STRENI.

Suppose ALPHONSO had returned ?
You know the terms——

CLAUDIO.

He's married.

STRENI.

I'm sorry for it.

CLAUDIO.

You joke.

STRENI.

A TRAGEDY.

43

STRENI.

Not I.

I'm not so merry.

CLAUDIO.

Sorry!

STRENI,

Yes, I say sorry.

CLAUDIO,

Why?

STRENI.

My daughter loved him. —

And he's an honest man.

CLAUDIO.

There are many such

I hope, my Lord.

STRENI.

Yes, hundreds who appear such

To one that is,

CLAUDIO.

Good Heaven! What can this mean? —

But some men's favour is a slippery hold.

Not long ago ALPHONSO was dismiss'd

To make me room; now 'tis my turn to yield

To some new favourite. I see it plainly.

STRENI.

STRENI.

I shall not henceforth be too rash in making
New friendships ; — that I promise you.

CLAUDIO.

My Lord,

You aim at something ; what I know not : but
To one who almost lived upon your smiles,
That angry coyness in your look is death ;
And every word you utter is so keen
It stings me to the heart. I could encounter
The rudest malice of indifferent men
With vengeance or contempt. But from the man
I love, and on whose love I built my happiness,
Unkindness tortures while it wounds. — How have I
Deserved this ? sure some secret foe of mine
Has been too busy with your ear : for foes
I have, more than I know of. What little services
I've done my country are by some repaid
With Envy : but I laugh at that, my Lord.
To one that's fortified in innocence
Such bolts are harmless : 'Tis as 'twere to batter
A fort with snow-balls. Yet it would be kind,
Nay 'tis but justice, if malicious tongues
Have tampered with my name, to let me know
Of what I stand accused,

STRENI.

A TRAGEDY.

45

STRENI.

You talk like one
Unconscious of all blame : but boldness is not
Always the surest test of innocence.

CLAUDIO.

What have I done ?

STRENI.

Look backwards, and consider.
Peruse your life a little.

CLAUDIO.

There's nothing there
I dare not boldly look into. But what,
My Lord, does all this tend to ?

STRENI.

Have you nothing
To fettle with the state ?—

CLAUDIO.

To fettle !—yes—
The state is in my debt.

STRENI.

But has the state
No claim on you ?

CLAUDIO.

46 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

CLAUDIO.

For nothing but my services
Whene'er it needs them.

STRENI.

Are you sure of that?

CLAUDIO.

As sure as that I live.

STRENI.

All-conscious Heaven!
Was ever such effrontery known!—D'ye think
We've no intelligence here? Or can you be
So ignorant of the dreadful storm that hangs
Ready to burst upon your head? is 't possible
You should not know how dear a reckoning, what
A bloody one perhaps, you have to pay?
For what, you best should guess.—Infatuate man!
Away!—There is no safety here!—Fly quickly!—
There is no ground where Naples has command
Can shelter you!—You're mad to stay one moment!—
The blood-hounds of the state are at your heels!—
Away, and hide yourself betimes!

CLAUDIO.

Ha! ha!

STRENI.

STRENI.

You laugh! — (He's surely mad!)

CLAUDIO.

Indeed I do,

'To see the bottom of this fearful mystery.

'Tis well no wounded conscience watches here

To cry out Guilty when another's crimes

Burst out. There's here a small mistake, my Lord;

Only one CLAUDIO for another; that's all.—

Ha! ha!

STRENI.

What other CLAUDIO?

CLAUDIO.

You have seen him.

A distant kinsman of my own, and tho'

He has hurt me in the tenderest point I pity him.

'Twas I that raised him to a place of trust,

Because I thought him honest; and, for some time,

So blind is friendship, I neglected all

Reports to his discredit, as the blasts

Of envy; till at last some flagrant acts

Appeared. — I never was so angry; never

Perhaps but then have I rebuked with rancour.

Yet on his promise to offend no more

He

48 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

He was continued. But it seems th' effect
Of all my friendly warnings, all my threats,
And weak mistaken lenity at last,
Was only this, to put him on his guard,
And make him a more politick knave. But now
He is in hands will strip him of his spoils,
And squeeze the inmost marrow from his bones.
For, if 'tis true what I have heard, by this
He's prisoner to the state.

STRENI.

(What shall I think ?)—

This is a strange mistake ; and if indeed
It be no more, I'm glad on't for the sake
Of one I am so loath to judge of harshly.
But on your honour, pardon me good Count,
Is there no more than this ?

CLAUDIO.

D'ye doubt my word ?—

What should I gain by such a falshood ?—I
Who see no luxury in simple lying ?
Were I th' obnoxious wretch you take me for
My mind had hardly been employed to-day
In nuptial thoughts ; nor should my presence here
Have shock'd good STRENI. Look upon my face ;

Is there ought there or in my whole behaviour
 That shews like guilt ? Heavens ! can I be so monstrous
 So madly wicked, so absurd a villain,
 For such I must be, to involve my friends,
 Those whom I love most, one whom I adore,
 In my perdition ?—But if you doubt me still,
 With all my heart here let us stop, my Lord,
 Till every straw suspicion stumbles at
 Be swept away. Inform yourself ; be cautious ;
 Do nothing rashly. And, my Lord, to shew you
 How dearly I regard your satisfaction :
 Let us, that you may weigh it at full leisure,
 Adjourn this marriage ; not for a month or two,
 But for a year or two, or three, or seven,—
 Or, if you please, for ever. Heaven forbid
 I should engage you in my bankruptcy !—
 Good God defend me !— So, farewell, my Lord—
 My servants there—

STRENI.

Come ; not so hot, my Count.
 A word or two before you go. Let's part
 Like friends at least.

CLAUDIO.

Where friendship is so ticklish
 The sooner done the better. I'm heart-sick

50 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Of hot and cold friends : They never quit the pains
It costs to manage them. Farewel !

STRENI.

Yet hear me.—

I'm sorry, CLAUDIO ; I am quite confounded
For this mistake. But the report was aimed
At you so very plainly, that your brother
Must have believed it. 'Tis not in my nature,
Old as I am, to be suspicious.
But where the welfare of my only child,
Her happiness for life depends, to scruple
Is no offence I hope ; at least I'm sure
meant you none. In proof of which, demand
My utmost power to serve you.

CLAUDIO.

Ah STRENI ! STRENI !

You know me but too well. I am a child
To you ; mere wax, you mould me at your pleasure :
You wound and heal me. Were I less your slave,
And less enamoured, this unkind behaviour
Had rid me of those chains which I prefer
To freedom—love and friendship.

STRENI.

Come, forgive

An old man's spleen ; forget it. And to prove

How

How little apt I am to keep impressions
 To CLAUDIO's disadvantage ; every art
 I have, and all my power, shall be employed
 To hasten on these nuptials. — But is it certain,
 This marriage of ALPHONSO ? make that appear,
 And the main obstacle's removed.

CLAUDIO.

Last night

I met a gentleman, you know him ; STURIO ;
 You have seen him with ALPHONSO : he comes on business
 Post-haste from Sicily. The night before
 He left Palermo was, he says, the eve of
 ALPHONSO's wedding, which his haste alone
 Excused him from attending. 'Tis like he brings
 Some message hither ; for he said, this morning
 He should be here. I thought to have found him here
 Before me ; but he'll soon appear, I doubt not,
 And certify his news.

STRENI.

Well, let him come.

He comes with no intelligence to retard
 Our purpose. — Shall I leave you, CLAUDIO, here
 Till I prepare OLYMPIA for such news
 As rashly told might hurt her ?

E 2

CLAUDIO.

CLAUDIO.

By all means.

STRENI.

You'll follow presently?

CLAUDIO.

I will, my Lord.

SCENE IV.

CLAUDIO.

What am I doing? 'Tis almost a crime
 To work on this good man's credulity thus.
 But the great principle which rules us all,
 The care that quits us not even in despair,
 Is love of self. — Self-preservation never
 Can be unjust. If this succeed, his credit
 And interest with the state may clear me. Nothing,
 Nothing but that can do it. But we must
 Dispatch: this crazy fabric of my fortune
 Totters at every step of stealing time. —
 But then to be reproached and baited for
 Dissimulation! — Who can prove that? — None.
 Was I obliged to know what secret trains
 Were laid to blow my envied grandeur up? —

I

Not

Not I. There's something too in STRENI's carriage
To justify a little double dealing.

He has not used me quite ingenuously;
And far from kindly. Interest is his God,
As well as that of other—honest men.
So far all's fair, we're on an equal footing.—
Well——

This is the most convenient cousin!—CLAUDIO,
I thank you for this seasonable help.

Would I could serve you in my turn! But that's
Too late; your doom is certain: mine comes next
To be determined; to my loss or not

I dare not guess.—But flourish I or fall,
'Tis still some satisfaction to have crush'd
The eager hopes of this impetuous youth.

Dupe of fair words, and smiles, and shrugs, ALPHONSO,
You have forgot, I do believe, but I

Shall still remember, with what haughtiness
You faced me when a younger Officer

O'erstrode you once. Was I to blame? He knew

The art of speaking to the palm; and was

A docile boy, as stupid as you please,

And not too apt to rouse much jealousy.

These are the men best fitted for promotion

In every rank of life.—But now to OLYMPIA.

Now help me Flattery! — Flattery! She deserves
All praise; such excellence could not find its match in
The men of this age: yet she must be mine;
And soon, or never. Hence then all delay;
My fate depends on this important day.

ACT III. SCENE I.

OLYMPIA, VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Come, cousin, you may breathe here freely; come,
There floats no fulsome incense here. You need
Fresh air; a tempest were almost too little
To fan this musky cloud of flattery off.
Foh! Such a stench of perfume suffocates worse
Than a volcano's mouth. Heaven! what a tongue!
I do believe the Devil inspires him. Bless me!
With what a face of plain sincerity,
With what a serious confidence, he throws out
The most extravagant flatteries! How they work
On your hard heart I know not: but for me,
I feel so tickled with my share, God knows,
I shall not sleep these three nights.

OLYMPIA.

Ah VICTORIA!

Was ever one so wretched?

VICTORIA.

To be teized thus
Indeed is most vexatious. But an hour,

56 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

'Tis hardly more, since from the middle gloom of
A long tempestuous night, a sudden blaze
Like noon burst out, almost with shocking brightness,
It smiled a while, enchantingly it smiled,
And promised balmy climes and happy shores :
Then, like a dream of th' air, this gaudy meteor,
This phantom of a fun, dissolved itself
Into the waste of darkness.

OLYMPIA.

Ah me ! VICTORIA !

What shall I do ?

VICTORIA.

Be firm, and never yield.
You're in the right, and cannot be too obstinate,
Be constant still ; a little struggling more
Will end this strife.

OLYMPIA.

Alas ! alas ! all's over.

VICTORIA.

All's over ! How my dear ? I say keep firm.
Why this despondence ? recollect yourself.
Have you, good Heaven ! forgot your father's promise,
So lately made ? his unexpected promise,
So voluntarily made ? Insist on that.

Never

Never forsake yourself, my dear OLYMPIA.

Abide inflexibly by that.

OLYMPIA.

Alas !

You come not near my grief.

VICTORIA.

I guess it. But

There's something yet more shocking than the loss of

A faithless lover. What you may avoid ;

And will I hope.

OLYMPIA.

Sure you have never loved.

VICTORIA.

My dear OLYMPIA, would you have me whine ?

And with an ill-timed sympathy indulge

A mind already too much softened, when

Th' occasion calls for fortitude and spirit ?

One effort more — fear nothing — the steady mind

O'er-matches fate itself. —

OLYMPIA.

My fate approaches.

Ah my VICTORIA ! — You heard the news ?

VICTORIA.

I did.

OLYMPIA.

58 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

OLYMPIA.

Do you believe it? May it not be false still?
Tell me sincerely what you think.

VICTORIA.

'Tis hard
To judge; a little time will shew it.

OLYMPIA.

But
May it not possibly enough be false?
It comes from a suspicious hand. A falsehood
Believ'd for e'er so short a time may speed
A wicked purpose; and this art they say
The cunning often practise.— Besides, this messenger
Appears not yet; 'tis noon too.—Ah VICTORIA!
Is there not room to hope still?

VICTORIA.

Dear OLYMPIA!
I would suppose the worst in doubtful cases.
For better mortify a little needlessly,
Than meet misfortune unprepared.

OLYMPIA.

Alas!
I am my own impostor. Strange, that misery
Should

A TRAGEDY.

59

Should flatter thus itself! Why dare I not
Resolve at once to look upon my fate?

A SERVANT.

Madam, a Gentleman, one Signor STURIO,
Begs at your leisure to attend you.

OLYMPIA.

STURIO!—

Well shew him in—STURIO you said? Good Heaven!
What shall I do, VICTORIA!—Stay—I'm busy.
Excuse me to him.—Tell him—by and by
I shall be glad to see him. When I ring
You may conduct him hither,

Ah VICTORIA!

[Sitting down hastily.]

What shall I do?

I cannot see this man:

[Rising.]

This beating at the heart makes it impossible—
I pant for breath—I shall not have the power
To speak one word.—Ah me!

VICTORIA.

Dearest OLYMPIA!

Yield not to this alarm. Recover yourself.
This flutter cannot last.

OLYMPIA.

Must I be seen

In this confusion? It must not be—I will not,

2

It

60 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

It is not fit I should.—Pray might not you
Receive this visit for me? Do, dear cousin.
Say I am sick, or whimsical, or mad;
Say any thing, and let me hide myself.

VICTORIA.

Stay, dear OLYMPIA. Come: it cannot be.
You cannot now with honour to yourself
Avoid this interview. Come, come, be firm.
'Twill soon be over. Were the case my own,
I think I should with most contemptuous coolness
Receive the last leave of a faithless man.
What should you fear who know the worst already?
Let indignation shake this tim'rous fit off;
And shew yourself superior to the loss
Of one not worth the keeping. Come, you can;
I know, I'm sure, you can.

OLYMPIA.

I am ashamed
Of this base weakness.—Well, what must be must be.
[Rings.]
Now, Heaven support me!

VICTORIA.

Never fear. The fit
Goes off: and what alarms you now, my dearest,
You will hereafter laugh at.—Shall I leave you?

OLYMPIA.

A TRAGEDY.

61

OLYMPIA.

No, stay. ——— He comes. ——— Ah!

VICTORIA.

Let him. He's more afraid

Than you.

SCENE II.

OLYMPIA, VICTORIA, STURIO.

STURIO.

All happiness to Lady OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

You're welcome, Sir, from Sicily. — Pray sit, Sir.

I'm glad to see you ; you're a mighty stranger.

We have not seen you I'm sure almost these two years.

How like you Sicily, Sir ? They say it is

A most enchanting spot.

STURIO.

A Paradise, Madam.

OLYMPIA.

They say so. Pray what news there, Sir ? I hope

You left all friends well, and—amongst the rest

How does your friend ALPHONSO ?

STURIO.

62 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

STURIO.

Madam, I left him well.

OLYMPIA.

We're told he has altered his condition lately. —
He's married? — Is he not? — This Lady, Sir,
My friend, may know whate'er belongs to me.
He's married? —

STURIO.

Madam —

OLYMPIA.

Well, I wish him joy
With all my heart. I hope 'tis happily.
The Lady — you have seen her?

STURIO.

Often, Madam.

CASERTA's daughter: not a first-rate beauty,
Nor yet quite homely.

OLYMPIA.

Well, I wish them happy
With all my soul. — No other news, Sir?

STURIO.

None. But

This letter, Madam, parting from ALPHONSO,

I pro-

I promised to deliver. ——— Pardon me
Th' abruptness of this hurry ; business calls me :
And what more time I have to spare at present
Lord STRENI claims. Madam, may all that's good
Ever attend you.

OLYMPIA.

I thank you, Sir. Farewell. —

SCENE III.

OLYMPIA, VICTORIA.

OLYMPIA.

Ah! ah! VICTORIA! [*Throwing herself into a chair.*]

VICTORIA.

Dear OLYMPIA, patience! ———

What shall I do? — When I should comfort her
I weep myself. — My dear OLYMPIA! —

OLYMPIA.

Ah me!

VICTORIA.

This desperate grief will kill her.

OLYMPIA.

Oh! Oh! Oh!

VICTORIA.

64 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

VICTORIA.

My dear OLYMPIA, let us not indulge
This weakness of our spirit. — Come, my dearest,
Come rouse yourself.

OLYMPIA.

Alas! alas! VICTORIA! —

Do not despise me.

VICTORIA.

Nay, my dear, this weakness
Has nothing shameful in it. As it shews
A delicate mind, it is a beauty rather;
And only grows a fault and a misfortune
By too much yielding to it.

OLYMPIA.

Ah VICTORIA! —

I am so humbled with repeated shocks
That my tame spirit sinks beneath its wrongs. —
But for this letter — I am blind with weeping —
Read it, VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Burn it.

OLYMPIA.

Read it first.

VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

“ Madam, in spite of all your neglects I have prevailed
“ upon myself to write to you once more, that you
“ may know I have temper enough to forgive them.
“ I am not so selfish as to disapprove of your choice ;
“ it is perfectly prudent ; for wealth you know
“ is the great support of female pride : vanity I should
“ say, for pride is too noble a name for it. I wish you
“ joy of your Count ; there is one noble quality at-
“ tends him—he is rich. But if he ever dares appear
“ where I am, were he twenty times your husband, I
“ shall take the liberty to put him in mind of some
“ other qualities I have discovered in him. In the mean
“ time I am so far from reproaching you with incon-
“ stancy, that I thank you for having shewn it before
“ it could essentially hurt me. I am following your
“ example, and shall forget all former attachments as
“ fast as I can. It is what I owe in justice to myself,
“ and to one of your sex who deserves all my love and
“ esteem. Farewell, OLYMPIA ! You are not what I
“ thought you once. But may Heaven rain gold upon
“ you ! So prays the forgiving, tho’ monstrously
“ abused

ALPHONSO.”

OLYMPIA.

What does he say ?

[*Snatching the letter.*]

66 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

VICTORIA.

Cousin, I give you joy
Of this deliverance from one worthless man.

OLYMPIA.

What does he say? — *All my neglects* — that's well.
He has *prevailed upon himself* — 'Tis much
So great a spirit should condescend so far
As to abuse me! — *I have temper enough* —
Yes temper! surely — *To forgive you*, that's pleasant —
'Tis pity you should have reason to forgive me.
Your choice is perfectly prudent — Fool! what choice?
The only choice I ever made was a wrong one,
And I'm ashamed of 't — thank Heaven I've missed it! —
Choice! —

What's this he talks
Of *wealth* — of *female pride*, and *vanity*? —
Such rambling stuff! — he's mad! the man's distracted!
You *wish me joy*. Heaven mend your crazy head!
Did you ever hear the like?

VICTORIA.

'Tis an original.

OLYMPIA.

But if he ever dares appear, &c.

How well he counterfeits anger, and plays the bully! —

A TRAGEDY.

67

But here's a stroke worth all the rest—*I am so far
From reproaching you with inconstancy, &c.*
—*Before it could essentially hurt me—*

What does he mean? 'There is no bearing this!
Base foul-mouthed perjured traitor, have you the face
Thus to abuse me, whose only fault to you
Was too much constancy? I'm well repaid
For all the griefs my foolish constancy
Has cost me!—Am I not, VICTORIA?

VICTORIA.

Curse him!

He is not worth your anger.

OLYMPIA.

I am following your example—

Good again!—*and shall forget—forget*
Me! by all means do. *In justice to one*
Of your sex who deserves all my love and
Esteem—

That she may do without deserving much.—

You are not what I thought you once—

No more are you—May Heaven

Rain all its plagues upon me, if you dwell

A moment longer here—Thus, thus I tear

The villain from my heart. 'Tis done at once.—

There, there—thou art no more. [*Tearing the letter.*]

F 2

VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Who talks of want
Of spirit ? How this haughtiness becomes thee !
This indignation's charming.

OLYMPIA.

Well, I'm cured
Of one great folly. How light my heart feels from
A villainous guest that sat like lead upon it !
My spirit mounts again. Believe me, cousin,
I'm glad of this man's baseness ; I enjoy it :
There's luxury in it. I do not entertain
A wish so tame as that he had proved unalterable.
'Tis better as it is. It feeds my spite
Voluptuously to find him such a villain.
I wish he knew how heartily I scorn him !
How thoroughly I detest him ! — He shall know it.
I'll make him feel it.—

VICTORIA.

Your absolute neglect,
As if such things had never past, will gall him.
'Twill be the finest vengeance ! Cool neglect,
If there is pride in him, will humble him more
Than fifty thousand spiteful offices.

OLYMP

A TRAGEDY.

69

OLYMPIA.

Oh! that mean letter! I could tear myself.
I wish the palsy had seized this hand before
It did me such disgrace.

VICTORIA.

My dear OLYMPIA,
Ne'er let that hurt you. You did but what was honourable.
Were it to do again you should. — It leaves
His baseness no excuse.

OLYMPIA.

Pray, when this message came,
How did I look, VICTORIA? tell me plainly.
Did I seem violently shocked?

VICTORIA.

By no means.

OLYMPIA.

Look'd I not flush'd and pale by turns? No signs
Of wildness or disorder?

VICTORIA.

None that he could perceive.

OLYMPIA.

Did I not falter in my speech a little?

F 3

VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Not more than I do now.

OLYMPIA.

Nor tremble ?

VICTORIA.

No.

Thou didst behave with so composed a grace,
I could have hugg'd thee.

OLYMPIA.

Well, I'm glad of this,

And now, VICTORIA, I shall shew this false one
How slightly I regard him. I have the means
To shew him instantly 'twas honour, more
Than ill-directed love, that made me stand
So long and close a siege ; made me hold out
To disobedience, almost to rebellion,
Against my father's threats, his warm intreaties,
Against his wiser choice. My honour now
Absolved, I cannot be too passive to
My filial duty.

VICTORIA.

What dost thou mean, OLYMPIA ?

OLYMPIA.

To mortify a villain's insolence.

VICTORIA.

A TRAGEDY.

71

VICTORIA.

But how ?

OLYMPIA.

By giving my rejected vows to
The man he hates ; whom for his sake I scorned ;
Whom now I love because I know he hates him.
Yes, I will give his mortal foe my hand.—
By heaven, I will !

OLYMPIA.

You will ! indeed not you.

OLYMPIA.

Then, if I do not, may the——

SCENE IV.

OLYMPIA, VICTORIA, STRENI.

STRENI.

Well, OLYMPIA.

You cannot doubt it now ? The truth appears
At last. You see, what happens every day,
The fickleness of youthful vows : despise it ;
The dignity of your sex demands it of you.
Laugh at it.

F 4

OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

Nay, my Lord, I have forgot it.
There is but one reflection stings me now.
I have, against my nature, stubbornly
Opposed my father's will, his just command.
Most heartily I repent it; and I hope
Your goodness will forgive a crime which honour
Betrayed me to. My honour disengaged,
I have no will but yours.

STRENI.

There spoke my daughter!
My will, my pleasure is to see you happy.
'Tis that engrosses all my cares; for that
Have I so steadily withstood your tears,
And made the weakness of affection yield
To rigid reason. Now th' auspicious hour
Appears; and not to dally needlessly
With time, what must be done to-morrow may
As well be done to-day. Nay were it only
For triumph's sake, to make as light of love
As the most fickle boy, the sooner the better,
This very day —

OLYMPIA.

This moment!

VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Hold, OLYMPIA!

STRENI.

Hold you, VICTORIA!

VICTORIA.

No : I will not hold.

Shall I, my Lord, when hurried by despair
My friend would plunge into the boiling deep,
Look calmly on, and cry Well done ; 'tis right ;
This world is not for you ; destroy yourself ;
And do it bravely, as becomes your spirit ?—
But this is worse. Death ends all human woes ;
But this is launching a weak slender bark
Into a sea of sorrows.

STRENI.

Pray, good madam,
None of your rhetoric.

VICTORIA.

I affect not rhetoric,

'Tis truth.

STRENI.

'Tis false.

VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

My Lord, I should be grieved
 To see the trial hazarded. — OLYMPIA ! —
 You're going in a sudden fit of spleen
 To throw yourself away. ALPHONSO has done it.
 But disagreeable ties fit not so heavy
 On his as on our sex. Yet he's unhappy :
 Self-ruined, blindly hurried to his fate.
 For he has married from mere pique, I'm positive ;
 And loves you still. That angry letter shews it.

OLYMPIA.

Love me ! Ne'er name him more : it shocks me.

VICTORIA.

Cousin,

Is't possible a little passing gust
 Of spleen should drive you to devote your life
 To eternal discontent ? To wed the man
 You cannot love—whom you despise ?—Good Heaven !
 The moment that you cool you'll give the world
 To have the deed undone,

STRENI.

This is intolerable !

VICTORIA, you're too busy, much too busy.

Meddle

Meddle not here, I charge you. Mind your own
Affairs.

VICTORIA,

My friend's are mine. Pray, good my Lord,
What interest of my own have I to meddle?
'Tis neither vanity nor love of brawls,
I'm sure, that makes me busy. But is this
A time for tame implicit complaisance?
Can I sit still, and silently approve
When those I love are bent on desperate deeds?
Call me officious and impertinent,
As many meddlers as you chuse, I care not,
For be as angry as you please, at least
I will discharge my mind.

STRENI.

You're mad, you're mad.—
You're mad, I tell you.

VICTORIA.

'T may be.— But dear OLYMPIA,
Why will you hurry on a change, at best
So awful; here most certainly so fatal?

OLYMPIA.

It is my father's will,

VICTORIA,

76 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

VICTORIA.

Your father is
Too good to exact obedience here, against
Your inclination. 'Tis not very long since
He told you so.

STRENI.

Good God! what must I bear?
Is this exaction? Bless me! is it not
Her own free choice?—Pray, is it not, OLYMPIA?

OLYMPIA.

Alas! my father!—

STRENI.

What wouldst thou say?

OLYMPIA.

Forgive

My wavering mind. I want not to retract
My hasty promise. Only give me time,
A little time, till old impressions die;
That I may yield a more devoted heart,
A heart more worthy of a good man's vows.

STRENI.

Heaven's curse on all romance! You've learnt, OLYMPIA,
A delicacy foreign to this world.

You

You will, in spite of plain good sense, refine
Yourself into a fool. How many matches,
And happy matches too, had ne'er been made
Were all your sex as scrupulous as you are.
But you're so fickle, now you say this moment,
And now next year.

OLYMPIA.

Alas ! it was my rashness.
I hope my father will not urge against me
What passion tortured from me.

STRENI.

Who can bear this ?
By Heaven I shall run mad !—To have a daughter
So obstinate against her father's will !
Against her own good fortune !—Gracious Heaven !
Why did you curse me with a stubborn child ?
I have but one, and she's ———

VICTORIA.

Dear good my Lord,
Why all this heat ? OLYMPIA knows her duty ;
And only begs a little time—

STRENI.

To shuffle.
I'll have no more of that. I have too long
Indulg'd

78 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Indulg'd her squeamish humour : but I will not
Be longer trifled with in this, depend on't.
And if she is my daughter ; if I live,
This day shall make her, what she ought to wish,
Count CLAUDIO's wife : this very hour shall do it,
By Heaven it shall.

VICTORIA.

But why to-day, my Lord ?
Why should it be so sudden ?

STRENI.

'Tis my pleasure,
I'll have it so. Let me alone ; I know sure
What I am doing.

VICTORIA.

Yet hear me, good my Lord—

STRENI.

No more ! I would not have you waste your breath.
'Tis fix'd ; and may I never taste of bliss
If ought shall shake me.

VICTORIA.

O Heaven!—

OLYMPIA.

Cousin, forbear.—

Pardon it father to my perverse fate

That

That I've e'er combated your sacred will.
'Tis but in this I e'er could hesitate
At one command of yours. You are determined ;
And were it to my ruin, I obey.
I've nothing more to plead.

STRENI.

My dearest child,
Not to thy ruin ; Heaven forbid ! I lead thee
To honour, happiness, establish'd bliss.
Thou soon shalt be the envy of thy sex,
And I the happiest father Heaven e'er smiled on.
Come ; let us go, and seize the prosperous hour ;
No dallying now, while fortune's in our power.

VICTORIA.

Alas ! alas ! what fortune I foresee
In this, is black, and ends in misery.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

ALPHONSO.

Married ! Then what a wretch art thou, ALPHONSO ?
 Just married ! — Fates, I am your daily sport.
 Born to be wretched, all my life has been
 A train of strange mischances. Married ! and to
 My most detested foe ! — Death ! must this be ?
 It shall not, were all hell in arms to guard
 This imp of treachery. My quick revenge
 Shall burst this fiend-tied most unnatural knot,
 And make all villains quake —

A SERVANT.

My Lady, Sir,
 The Countess will attend you.

ALPHONSO.

'Tis well. I thank you. —
 The Countess ! Vengeance ! Oh I shall run mad ! —
 My fluttering heart ! She comes ! I caught a glimpse
 That charms and tortures me.

SCENE

SCENE II.

ALPHONSO, OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

Who's this? defend me!

What are you?

ALPHONSO.

Need I tell my name, OLYMPIA?

OLYMPIA.

I have no business with your name nor you.

What brought me hither?—

ALPHONSO.

Stay, OLYMPIA, hear me.—

OLYMPIA.

I'm not at leisure.—

ALPHONSO.

But, we part not so.

I will be heard.

OLYMPIA.

Presumptuous! are you mad?

Let go my hand.

82 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

ALPHONSO.

'Twas mine—till fate and you—

OLYMPIA.

Yours!—Never!—"Twas not fate but I that gave it,
And my heart with it, to a man ten times
Your worth. It was my voluntary deed.
I gave it to——

ALPHONSO.

A villain.

OLYMPIA.

Tell him so.

ALPHONSO.

I will; ne'er doubt it: what should hinder me?

OLYMPIA.

You will? I like your manners, to abuse
My husband to my face.

ALPHONSO.

Your husband! plagues!

A knave that should be married to the wheel.—
And you to call him husband!

OLYMPIA.

I'm not used

T' exchange high speeches with the mad. Go, leave me,
And

And keep your head cool.—Good God! I cannot think
What brought you here. How! leave your bride so soon!—
I've had a lucky miss.

ALPHONSO.

Alas, OLYMPIA!

How you mistake!

OLYMPIA.

In what?

ALPHONSO.

Both you and I
Are monstrously abused; the meereft dupes
That artful villainy and capricious fate
Ever combined to laugh at.

OLYMPIA.

How?

ALPHONSO.

Good God!

Can you imagine, were I so engaged
As you conceive, I should so far depart
From all propriety as this day to stun you
With impertinent complaints?

OLYMPIA.

O Heaven! what mean you?

C 2

ALPHONSO.

ALPHONSO.

While you remain thus ignorant of the truth,
My conscious honour so forsakes me, that
I deem myself the traitor you suppose me.
But know, OLYMPIA——

OLYMPIA.

What ?

ALPHONSO.

There never was
A heart more true to tenderness than mine.
'Twas your's, 'tis your's ; you reign unrivaled there ;
You ever did, and ever shall : I scorn
All other vows.

OLYMPIA.

Bless me ! you rave indeed.
This is strange talk for a new-married man !

ALPHONSO.

You will not understand me, dear OLYMPIA—
I am not married.

OLYMPIA.

Horrors ! Did I hear you ?—

Not married !

ALPHONSO.

A TRAGEDY.

85

ALPHONSO.

No.

OLYMPIA.

Not married!

ALPHONSO.

No, OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

Not married!—Oh such monstrous villainy!—
I'm dizzy—hold me—ah!—

ALPHONSO.

Alas! alas!

What shall I do? Dear dear OLYMPIA!—ah me!
I fear she's dead. A sad and mortal paleness
O'erspreads her lovely face—These hands are cold
And damp as clay—She does not breathe—O God,
She's gone for ever—Dead, dead, dead, OLYMPIA!
O horrible hour!—I follow thee,—yes, thou
Shalt be my angel to conduct my flight
From this base world.—She stirs—the deadly hue
Shifts from her cheek—she breathes—she sighs—
OLYMPIA!

OLYMPIA.

Where am I?—Ah—

G 3

ALPHONSO.

ALPHONSO.

Lift these sweet eyes again.

OLYMPIA.

Alas, this is no dream! I am awake.

It is ALPHONSO! — will no shock destroy me?

Ah! when shall I be dead?

OLYMPIA.

Talk not of dying. —

OLYMPIA, when you do, this world to me

Becomes a waste: 'tis little better now.

OLYMPIA.

What blows of fate the wretched may survive!

The worst I had to fear is come upon me;

And yet I live! — But —

ALPHONSO.

Something in that look

Made beauty dreadful.

OLYMPIA,

Oh, my fatal rashness!

Alas, ALPHONSO! — yet what could I do?

Provoked by false intelligence — how false

Is yet a mystery: STURIO, an honest man,

Your friend, produced it. Was there room to doubt

Of

37

ALPHONSO.

OLYMPIA.

ALPHONSO.

G 4

It

It only mortified. He strove in vain
To rouse me to resentment. Inwardly
He burnt for some fair opportunity,
That I might be the first to cancel vows
Which STRENI seemed not forward to confirm,
The opportunity he wished for came
As fate had winged it. For I had not long
Pin'd at Palermo, when a friendship grew
Between my father and the Count CASERTA ;
Who from some discontent had long before
Retired from Naples thither, and still loved
By sympathy whoever hated Naples.
This noble Count, proud of his ancient blood,
Had two young daughters. The eldest JULIA,
Some time had lived confined for an attempt
To steal a marriage with a youth whose family,
Tho' not obscure, he thought no match for his.
Now grown impatient of his jealous cares,
It pleased him in my favour to let slip
Some distant hints, which with a ranc'rous joy
My father snatched ; he pressed me eagerly
To seize th' occasion : as inflexibly
I waved th' unwelcome offer. Till at last
There went a rumour made my blood run cold,
That my false rival's suit was daily prospering.

When

When I look back, 'twas his own crafty lie,
 For I can trace it to his emissaries;
 Tho', blinded then and giddy with despair
 And jealousy, too easily I was wrought on
 To give it credit. What confirmed it too
 Was that to all my frequent letters, one
 Reply had ne'er been made.

OLYMPIA.

Oh Heaven!—not one
 Of all those letters ever came to cheer
 My desolate mind. I guess'd the cause, it seems,
 Too truly.—But proceed.

ALPHONSO.

Long urg'd and teiz'd
 In vain, at last provoked I made my suit;
 Which, from a coy reception, by degrees
 Was kindly entertained: but still it made
 A ling'ring progress, which I more rejoiced
 Than grieved at. For, tho' JULIA was compleat
 In all th' engaging ways that could be wished
 In a companion; and, tho' scarce a beauty,
 Had personal charms sufficient to surprize
 A vacant breast; yet, ah OLYMPIA! mine
 Still with vain efforts struggled to shake off

Its

90 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Its first lov'd conqueror's sway ; and still I hoped :
Till with such plausible consistent strokes
Your marriage was reported, that self-flattery
No longer could amuse me. By this our fathers,
Tired with a dallied courtship, hurriedly
Urged on the treaty, and the day was fix'd.
'Twas now just not arrived, when late at night
Your letter came. Never was mortal breast
So tortured with conflicting powers ; with joy,
With anxious hopes and fluttering fears, shame, honour,
Not for all Sicily would I again
Endure that restless night's perplexity.
Tho' 'twas determined in my mind, how'er
The world might clamour, that all other interests,
All other decencies and duties, should
Yield to my first engagement. The morning came
On which I had to deal with difficulties
That no address, without some miracle,
Seemed equal to encounter. When, behold—
JULIA was fled !—Good God ! my lighten'd soul
Grew mad with joy. —I took a hasty leave,
And hied me hither.

OLYMPIA.

Ah ! you came, ALPHONSO,
But just too late. But Heaven would have it so.—
I'm doom'd to wretchedness !

ALPHONSO.

A TRAGEDY.

91

ALPHONSO.

Alas, OLYMPIA!

Think on my misery!

OLYMPIA.

We both are ruined
By those who loved us, and have been too busy
To make us happy.

ALPHONSO.

Is there no resource?

No means to burst thro' all these rotten ties,
The work of treachery? Sure there are, OLYMPIA!
Heaven does not hear involuntary vows,
Vows cunningly surprized, or made in anger.
Shall the heart's vows, the ties of mutual love,
Old plighted faith, and sympathy of souls,
Yield to a mere cold formal obligation?
It must not be. I claim the elder right:
You were by all consents devoted mine,
Before this selfish insincere profane
Intruder ever saw you. Dear OLYMPIA,
Let us oppose fair arts to impious fraud.
I have the means at hand to snatch you from
This fatal place, to where the purest vows
May soon before the holy shrine dispel
The sorcery of those sacrilegious rites;

And

92 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

And to its lawful owner render back
Th' inviolated prize.

OLYMPIA.

Alas ! alas !

ALPHONSO, this is raving.

ALPHONSO.

Where's the difficulty ?

The night comes on to favour this exploit.
Let us not curse our timid hearts hereafter
Because for fear of little squalls we lost
The tide of fortune. — Ah pity me, OLYMPIA !
To live without you is despair and frenzy.
I will not live upon such terms.

OLYMPIA.

Alas !

What you propose is neither fit nor practicable.
We needs must part — yes, we must part for ever.
Farewell, ALPHONSO ? — Leave me to my fate ;
No matter what it be. Farewell, farewell —
And when you think of me drop a sad tear,
And say there was a maid that lov'd me more
Than her own life. My kindest wishes still
Attend you with a warmth no time can cool ;
And my last breath shall bless you. Again farewell.

ALPHONSO,

ALPHONSO.

We must not part.

OLYMPIA.

We must, we must. Farewell.—

I heard a foot; it comes this way.—If e'er
You loved me, leave this place without delay.
Stay not a moment longer.—Ah ALPHONSO!—
Farewell for ever!—

ALPHONSO.

Stay, OLYMPIA: stay!—

She's gone! O Heaven!

SCENE III.

ALPHONSO, CLAUDIO.

CLAUDIO.

Good God! it is ALPHONSO!—

This is astonishing!—My dear dear friend,
This unexpected pleasure quite transports me.
Thrice welcome, dear ALPHONSO!

ALPHONSO.

Generous CLAUDIO,

I know it, and I thank your courtly words.

Would

94 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Would thoughts were visible, that it might appear
With what sincerity we love each other.
But compliments apart, pray are you not
Ashamed to see me?

CLAUDIO.

Why, ALPHONSO?

ALPHONSO.

Nay,

I know how nobly some despise all shame.
But are you not afraid to see the man
Who feels his wrongs, and will no longer bear 'em?

CLAUDIO.

I never was afraid to meet my foe,
Much less to see my friend. You have no cause
I'm sure, ALPHONSO, not to be my friend.
Were all the truth known it would soon appear
How from my heart I am, and still have been,
My generous brave ALPHONSO's. Hitherto
Indeed my friendly aims have still been cross'd;
And I have felt it more perhaps than you.
Tho' now those rubs to me seem rather fortunate:
For little steps, by which each ass can climb,
Are rather checks to merit, and disgrace
Generous ambition; which at one bold flight
Should

Should seize a station worthy of itself.
 And now the time draws near, when I shall prove
 By deeds with what sincerity I still
 Have lov'd ALPHONSO. Something that may suit
 Aspiring worth I purpose to resign ;
 And but retain it till my interest has
 Secured it yours. Nay were you not my friend,
 Of all men living I should wish it yours :
 Because I love my country as I ought,
 And would be honoured in my successor.

ALPHONSO.

Fine words ! enough to make a gull of one
 That did not know you. But they cost you nothing.—
 You talk of friendship ! and to me, presumptuous !
 You never was a friend, nor ever can be :
 I know what spurious metal you are made of.
 I come not here to dangle or amuse
 The fool of hope with catching slippery promises.
 I scorn the paultry sport.—Yet there's one favour,
 The only one that I shall ever deign
 To ask or to receive of you.

CLAUDIO.

What's that ?

ALPHONSO.

There is a fountain in the grove behind

96 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

The gardens, if you'll meet me there alone
Within this half hour, 'twill oblige me.

CLAUDIO.

Ha! ha!

If one could guess why, this would seem a challenge.
You're pleasant, dear ALPHONSO. Ha! ha! ha!

ALPHONSO.

You will not laugh it off so.

CLAUDIO.

If you're serious,

Why should I from the mere contagion of
An angry look, or a few hasty words,
Give up my calm mind to a giddy storm?
Or be with impotent madness drawn into
The eddy of my erring friend's conceits?
If when my friend is drunk with causeless rage
I lose my sober temper, I become
The greater lunatic. Hear me, good ALPHONSO:
I can and dare; but yet I should be sorry
To use my sword without some solid cause.
'T must be a solid cause indeed that spurs me
To point it at the honest breast of one
I've lov'd so truly. And, for all your anger,
Believe me (for I know myself and you)

Which

Which of us ever falls, the other leads
 A life of horror and remorse no time
 Can ever cure. Then ere we fight at least
 Let us explain ourselves. 'Tis chiefly from
 Fantastic jealousies, childish fits of spleen,
 Mistakes on one side and false pride on th' other,
 That honest men e'er quarrel.—Pray, ALPHONSO,
 In what have I offended?

ALPHONSO.

Holy Heaven!

Who would not think this cheat a faint, an oracle?
 But there's no devil to a smooth-tongued villain.—
 In what have you offended?—Hark ye, tell me
 Who was it that procured my banishment?
 Who was it that embargoed sacred truth,
 To give free traffic to pernicious lies?
 And by the most perfidious arts contriv'd
 To step between me and my dearest right?—
 I see by your look you're innocent of the matter:
 Deny it if you dare, I'll force the lie
 Down that false throat.

CLAUDIO.

In one not given to wine;
 Such frolics must proceed from want of sleep.

VOL. II.

H

Calm

98 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Calm these wild spirits with one night's repose,
And then I'll talk with you.

ALPHONSO.

Buffoon, no shuffling !
One of us two shall sleep his last to-night. —
You'll meet me presently.

CLAUDIO.

Excuse me now,
I'm otherways engaged.

ALPHONSO.

You lie.

CLAUDIO.

Beware,
I must not hear this.

ALPHONSO.

You lie.

CLAUDIO.

Nay, then —

ALPHONSO.

A stab !
Well aimed to miss. Now have at your false heart.

SCENE IV.

ALPHONSO, CLAUDIO, STRENI,
and *Servants*.

STRENI.

[their swords.—

What's this? what's this? Good Heaven!—beat down
Hold, hold, I charge you.—Part them—Are you mad?—
Pray how began this fray? ALPHONSO, CLAUDIO,
You're both my friends, and I am shocked to see
Such hot-brained work between you. How began this?—
Go you and wait without—Pray who began this?
Come, CLAUDIO, tell me,—was it you?

CLAUDIO.

My Lord,

I ne'er began a quarrel.—Let me breathe first—
And then I'll tell you.—

ALPHONSO.

Nay, 'twas I; I own it.—

Who else had reason to complain? 'Twas I,
Provoked by monstrous injuries, who gave
Opprobrious truths a vent. But 'twas not I,
Who like a cut-throat, an insidious coward,

H 2

Aimed

100 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

Aimed at my unguarded enemy's heart. I'm sorry
It should have happened here. I did not mean
To scare the peace of this respected house
With angry deeds.

STRENI.

Young blood is hot, ALPHONSO.

When I was young like you my sword would ach
At every slight offence : where none was meant
I've been too madly brave. But when the fit
Was fairly fought out, it never failed to end
In warmest friendship. Trust me we have wept
With generous passion, at the sudden change
From bloody strife to cordial amity.
There is no joy to that which noble foes
At reconciliation feel. Come, come your hands ;
Yours CLAUDIO, yours ALPHONSO. Come, embrace :
Be friends for ever.

CLAUDIO.

I have ever been,
And still shall be ALPHONSO's.

ALPHONSO.

As sincerely
Shall I be CLAUDIO's. — But you'll meet me?

CLAUDIO.

A TRAGEDY.

101

CLAUDIO.

Yes.

ALPHONSO.

Directly.

CLAUDIO.

Doubt not.

ALPHONSO.

Till then—farewell.—Good night.

My Lord, I must away. If you have ought
To do at Naples, I'm your post ; for there
I must be ere I sleep.

STRENI.

Good night, ALPHONSO.

I'm sorry for this haste : next time we meet
I hope to taste your company at more leisure.

SCENE V.

STRENI, CLAUDIO.

STRENI.

How does my Count ? You are not hurt I hope ?

CLAUDIO.

Not hurt, my Lord, but truly much amazed.
I did not dream to meet ALPHONSO here ;
Still less that we should quarrel.

H 3

STRENI.

STRENI.

'Tis no wonder,

CLAUDIO,

Not, that he should, before his wedding day
Could well be over, traverse land and sea
In search of quarrels ?

STRENI,

There's your mistake, my friend.—
That marriage came to nothing.

CLAUDIO.

Is it possible ?

STRENI,

'Tis true,

CLAUDIO.

Nay, then no wonder he should seek
To pierce my heart thro'. But how could this happen ?

STRENI,

I've learnt it but just now, 'Tis so, Within
I'll tell you how.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

CLAUDIO, *an Officer.*

OFFICER.

My Lord, my Lord, Lord CLAUDIO!

CLAUDIO.

Ha! who is this?—my watchful friend? what news?
There's horror in thy look.

OFFICER.

Fly, fly, my Lord.
This instant fly. They'll presently be here.
Your life is sold. Fly, fly.

CLAUDIO.

My life?

OFFICER.

Your kinsman
Has bought his own with yours.

CLAUDIO.

I thank him. Come;
Thy hand, I owe thee much; and if I live
Thou'rt made for ever.

H 4

OFFICER.

OFFICER.

Ah! my good Lord. But fly,
 Lose not a moment. Could I but contrive
 To misdirect their search.—I'll try.

CLAUDIO.

Farewell.

Success attend you,

SCENE VII.

CLAUDIO.

What a fool was I
 Not to have laid this prating knave asleep,
 This tell-tale coward, when I safely might?
 But that's too late.—What's next?—I'll meet my foe.—
 This challenge happens well. For if he drops,
 I fly for that; no other crime supposed
 To startle me. 'Tis something, plausibly
 To shun the fire-edge of a nation's vengeance,
 And to gain time gives art and fortune room
 To work such happy wonders, that despair
 Should never seize the wife.—But should I fall
 By this impetuous boy.—Yet better so
 Than give the curious mob a holiday
 To see my head jump off.—But then he comes

A con,

A conqueror to possess my bridal bed ;
And meet with mutual ardour virgin charms
That fruitlessly were mine.—That's worse than death !
It must not be. Against a deadly foe
All arts are justified. Thou dy'st, ALPHONSO.
Prepare to meet a sterner bride. I come :
Please Heaven thou shalt not triumph in my doom.

ACT V. SCENE I.

STRENI, VICTÓRIA.

STRENI.

'Tis but a qualm, a fit o' th' spleen, that's all.
'Twill soon blow over.

VICTORIA.

Consider it not so slightly,
My Lord: she's dreadfully ill; so much unhinged
The down that hardly lights might turn the scale
And sink her past recovery. — O 'twas frightful
To see her agonies!

STRENI.

How was she taken?

VICTORIA.

With a countenance so changed I hardly knew her,
Sobbing and trembling, shockingly pale as from
A mortal wound, she burst into the room

And

And flounced upon the floor. I flew to raise her ;
 Let me lie still and die, she said : half raised
 Flat on her face she rush'd again, and lay
 Like one abandoned to despair. Astonish'd
 What this should mean, I learnt at last a tale
 Enough to make her mad indeed.—You know it.

STRENI.

It happened ill ; 'twas pity. But what next ?

VICTORIA.

After the sad recital, long she sat
 Pensive, and lost in thought : one might as well
 Have talk'd to a statue ; at last she started up
 And walk'd about and muttered frantically.
 Music, her favourite study and delight,
 I hoped might calm her ; but no sooner rushed
 The harmony on her ears than down she sunk
 Upon a couch, and wept immoderately.
 I thought my heart would have broke.—

STRENI.

My poor OLYMPIA !

VICTORIA.

I sent to stop the music. After a pause
 Of silent grief, a fit of laughing seized her,
 So violent, so unnatural as it seemed,

'Twas

108 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

'Twas perfectly shocking. It left her quite exhausted;
And now she sleeps.

STRENI.

She has had such fits before.

This kind repose will cure her. POOR OLYMPIA
Has ever been too sensible to grief,
To joy, to all impressions; the misfortune
Of delicate spirits, which shake at every gust
That blows or hot or cold. Do, my VICTORIA,
Go keep all quiet, and when she wakes send hither.
She'll soon be well.

VICTORIA.

Would I were sure of that!

STRENI.

O never doubt it.—Who's there?—How I'm beset
With teizing cares and fretful circumstances!

SCENE II.

STRENI, *a Servant.*

STRENI.

No news yet of the Count? not one returned yet
Of those that went to search?

SERVANT.

A TRAGEDY.

109

SERVANT.

Not one, my Lord.

STRENI.

You sent them different ways?

SERVANT.

My Lord, I did.

STRENI.

I doubt some misadventure. Go, LORENZO,
Speed me the news whate'er they be, and rid me
Of this suspense.

SCENE III.

STRENI.

There's mischief in the wind.

He flit abruptly from me, after some
Ambiguous words, which then I did not mark.
They've surely met. That reconciliation was
A sham to blind me. I remember now
At shaking hands they whisper'd something.—Death!
I might have guess'd it. But who could have dreamt
He would have been so mad? What, in the name
Of all that's blundering, could provoke a man
Of courage so well proved, at such a time

To

110 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

To meet a foe whose challenge at any time
He might more to his dignity refuse?
Curse on his ill-tim'd valour!—I hope he's kill'd.
By heaven I care not! Such romantic fools
Should have no friends, and when they fall deserve
No pity.—Gods! will none come breathless in
To tell me he lies cold?—Here comes the tale.
Out with it—speak—the worst at once.

SCENE IV.

STRENI, *a Servant*.

SERVANT.

My Lord,

The gates are all beset with armed men.

STRENI.

Confusion! What is this? What armed men?
Is this young ruffian mad? From its firm base
He heaves this marble-pillar'd castle first,
And mounts it on the wind—He force these gates!
Were he an earthquake shot from hell he should not.—
What armed men?

SERVANT.

The servants of the state.

STRENI.

A TRAGEDY.

III

STRENI.

O God! God! God!

SERVANT.

Their leading officer,
My Lord, desires an audience.

STRENI.

Send him hither.

SCENE V.

STRENI.

O monstrous! monstrous! O amazing villain!
I'm stupified to death. The world might rush
And I not feel it now.

SCENE VI.

STRENI, OFFICERS.

OFFICER.

My Lord, I come
On an unpleasing duty, to demand
On the state's part, one whom may justice find
Without a flaw, a guest of this fair roof—
Count CLAUDIO.

STRENI.

STRENI.

Sir, he was here, but is gone ;
 And may all plagues go with him. Sir, he's vanished.
 He disappeared, as fiends do, suddenly.
 By this he shakes all hell with laughing at
 Our fruitless search.

OFFICER.

My Lord, you cannot mean
 To hide him from the state. Th' attempt were vain,
 Might turn suspicion into certainty.
 Where'er he be, if I may judge, my Lord,
 'Twere wise he should surrender.

STRENI.

Sir, this house [*Rings.*]
 Is open to you ; find him if you can.
 These walls shall screen no traitor. If he's here
 I'm much deceived.

OFFICER.

I doubt not, good my Lord,
 Your well known honour. But the state's command
 Must punctually be followed ; and I hope
 My Lord will pardon to our present office
 What rigid form exacts.

STRENI.

A TRAGEDY.

113

STRENI.

You're welcome, Sir.

Who's there?—LORENZO, shew these Gentlemen
That if there lurks a traitor here, this house
Is sick till it disgorge him.

OFFICER.

After what

You have declared, my Lord, our search becomes
A fruitless office, a mere ceremony ;
Which you'll excuse.

STRENI.

© Sir, most heartily.

SCENE VII.

STRENI.

O this infernal traitor ! what could move him
'T' abuse me thus !—He thought perhaps to screen
His frauds by my alliance. Subtle fool,
This unaccomplish'd treaty binds us not.
Or if it did ; were he my daughter's husband,
And she a mother by him, he should find me
No patron of his crimes. Ah poor OLYMPIA!
How I have plagued myself and tortured thee,

VOL. II.

I

To

To match thee thus unworthily!—Death and hell!
 What madness, what curs'd dæmon, prompted me
 T' anticipate the day? Had I not been
 Bereft of judgment and all patience this
 Disgrace could ne'er have touched us.—O fool! O shame!
 To be this felon's tool! Yet who could dream
 He should be such a villain? How unshaken,
 He stood what conscious innocence might shrink at!
 But callous villainy feels no shame——

SCENE VIII.

STRENI, *a Servant.*

SERVANT.

My Lord,

I bring disastrous news.

STRENI.

Let those who ne'er
 Have felt misfortune start when sorrow's named.
 For me I grow so hardened to all shocks
 I might defy the fates. Then tell thy tale,
 Were it as mortal as the cannon's mouth
 Discharge it on mine ear.

SERVANT.

A TRAGEDY.

115

SERVANT.

My Lord,——ALPHONSO

Is kill'd.

STRENI.

Unfortunate youth!

SERVANT.

The Count is fled,
With fifty horsemen at his heels.

STRENI.

I grieve
For poor ALPHONSO.—Where found you him?

SERVANT.

In the Grove.
Shot thro' the breast; just dropt; his hand clinch'd on
His half-drawn sword.

STRENI.

O murderous villain!—Go,
Compose the body privately; and let
No whisper of this sad event steal out
T' alarm too tender ears.—

I 2

SCENE

SCENE IX.

STRENI.

Ah poor OLYMPIA!

How shall thy tottering senses bear this shock?
Had I not fatally interposed thou mightst
Have been the happiest—

SCENE X.

STRENI, VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

O my Lord! my Lord!—

STRENI.

What now, VICTORIA?

VICTORIA.

Poor OLYMPIA!—

STRENI.

What!

VICTORIA.

O mad! mad! mad! The poor dear creature's mad!

STRENI.

A TRAGEDY.

117

STRENI.

Just heaven forbid !

VICTORIA.

Alas ! it is too sure.—

Just now from a most unquiet sleep, that seem'd
Nature conflicting with despair, she started ;
Cried murder ! murder ! help ! ALPHONSO's murder'd !
Then with such wildness in her looks and action,
Such frantic vehemence of terror, grief,
And pity, she address'd th' invisible air ;
It chill'd us all with horror.—You'd have thought
ALPHONSO had been kill'd indeed, and that
His ghost stood there.

STRENI.

Amazement !

VICTORIA.

By and by

She flew to the window ; whence, her delicate frame
Is with convulsive violence so possess'd,
'Twas all that three of us could do to hinder
A fatal leap.

STRENI.

Heaven guard my child !

[*Going.*]

I 3

OLYMPIA,

118 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

OLYMPIA, *behind the Scenes,*

Away!

Away! I say. —

STRENI,

Hush!

OLYMPIA,

Hold me not, good fiends!

In God's name vanish! Fly, fly, fly!

WOMAN,

Dear Madam! —

SCENE XI.

STRENI, VICTORIA, OLYMPIA,
Women,

OLYMPIA,

Dear me no dear! I'll not be dear'd. Avaunt,
Ye wheedling witches! I know who taught you that,
Off, I conjure you — Go — Hah! what are these!

STRENI,

How does my dearest child!

OLYMPIA,

A TRAGEDY.

119

OLYMPIA.

This looks so like
My father, and speaks so like him !

STRENI.

I am, I am.

Dost thou not know me ?

OLYMPIA.

Are you not a ghost then ?
Mere visible nothing, as ineffential
As the vain rainbow ? With reverence let me touch
Your hand. I shall know by that.—O 'tis, 'tis, 'tis
My real father, let me kiss for ever
This sacred hand. I'll never part with it more.—
But why d'ye look so sad ? There's something troubles you.

STRENI.

Alas, my child !—

OLYMPIA.

O do not weep ; that's dreadful.
My heart is ready to break to see you thus :
And yet I cannot weep. Oh ! Oh !—Come, this way,
Let us go home.

I 4

STRENI.

THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

STRENI.

Thou'rt there already.

OLYMPIA.

O fye

That you should talk so!—D'ye see these creatures?

STRENI.

Yes,

Your faithful servants.

OLYMPIA,

Witches! witches! witches!

The mermaids of the burning sea!—Heaven snatch us

From these enchanted walls!—Th' arch conjurer

Will soon be here, and then all's lost. —

STRENI.

Who's that?

OLYMPIA.

His name is—I forget it, but you may guess. —

Do not be angry. My head's confused a little:

But I hope I said no harm. I named no body;

Yet I'm afraid you're angry.—O blast me not

With your heavy curses!

STRENI.

Heaven for ever bless

My dearest child!

OLYMPIA.

A TRAGEDY.

531

OLYMPIA.

Indeed you are too kind
To your poor unduteous daughter. Heaven and you
Forgive my crimes ! that I may die when I please.—
O curse on all mistakes !

STRENI,

What dost thou mean ?

OLYMPIA.

I'll tell you when the mists are gone. — I have it.
I chid ALPHONSO cruelly—Heaven forgive me !—
Indeed he was not such a fickle coxcomb
As some suppose.—They told me he was married ;
But I know other matters. — Oh ! oh ! oh !—

STRENI.

Kind Heaven restore her precious wits again,
And punish me with any other plague
But this !—

OLYMPIA.

D'ye know what I dreamt last night ?—Oh 'twas
hide o us fancy !—

STRENI.

Never mind dreams, my child.

OLYMPIA

OLYMPIA.

The Moon spoke to me ! 'Twas horrible. Yet that
Was a trifle to what happened afterwards. —

O this head ! this head ! —

I cannot put it into words ; but while
Such dreams are going who would dare to sleep ? —
I have not slept this month.

VICTORIA.

Come, dear OLYMPIA,
'Tis late, come go to bed. I'll watch by your side,
While sweet repose dissolves those idle fears.
Let us to bed.

OLYMPIA.

Away ! — Are you a witch too !
You league against me too ? — Cousin of vengeance,
Hark you, I'll never go to bed ; I'll die first. —
O fye, fye, fye ! to what would you betray me !
Go, go, vile shocking creature ! —

STRENI.

This to VICTORIA,
Your dearest friend, OLYMPIA ?

OLYMPIA.

Yes, my friend !
Such friends as Heaven defend me from ! — My friend,
To

A TRAGEDY.

423

To snatch the antidote of all forcery from me ?
The balm that heals all wounds.—Ah you're a trusty one ;
Would I had known you sooner !

STRENI.

What means this ?

VICTORIA.

Mere jealous fancies, sick imaginations,
Like all the rest.

OLYMPIA.

Hark ye : — Nay if you weep
I've done. I'm such a tender hearted fool.—
Ah VICTORIA, VICTORIA !—

VICTORIA.

Dear dear OLYMPIA !—

OLYMPIA.

Hush ! What's that ? Let me go.
He's coming.

VICTORIA.

Who, my dear !

OLYMPIA.

'Tis CLAUDIO.—Hide me !—

STRENI.

124 THE FORCED MARRIAGE,

STRENI.

He'll trouble thee no more. — He's gone.

OLYMPIA.

Ah! would

I had never seen him! that's my prayer, and if
There's any harm in it—O Heaven!—See there!

STRENI.

Bless thee! What's there?

OLYMPIA.

See! See!

STRENI.

See what, my child?

OLYMPIA.

D'ye ask?

STRENI.

What should I see?

OLYMPIA.

A fight to break

A heart of rock, and make the lion whine
Like a whipt spaniel.—ALPHONSO pale and bloody!
O misery, misery! O most lamented youth!
Who did this cruel stern remorseless deed

No

No miracle can undo?—Dead, murder'd, butcher'd!
Speak, I conjure you. Dear dreadful vision, say
What ruffian shall be torn on the wheel for this?
Oh! 'tis not to be born to see you look so.—
Speak if thou canst—He's gone!

STRENI.

Alas! my child,

Thou speak'st to the winds.

OLYMPIA.

Good God!—VICTORIA!—

VICTORIA.

'Twas a mere fancy, for ALPHONSO lives;
And lives, I hope, for many happy days
With his OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

Insupportable!

Must I be juggled out of my senses thus?
It seems I am a child, a fool. Wise cousin,
Pray do not laugh at me: do not, I say.
And yet it may be wit perhaps to jest
With torture and despair.

VICTORIA.

Can you suspect me

For such a monster?

OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

Did you not see him plainly?

VICTORIA.

Believe me, no.

OLYMPIA.

That's strange! that's strange, indeed!

STRENI.

How deadly pale,

She's grown!—Thou'rt sick, my child.

OLYMPIA.

Too well, too well!

Only a little chilliness wanders o'er me.—

Hark how my ears ring! Lend me your hand, VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Alas! thou shudder'st so thou canst not stand.

Cold sweats bedew thee; thou'rt ready to faint, dear girl.

Come, lean upon this couch. So.—

OLYMPIA.

As you will.

Do with me what you please.—Ha! there again!

Now if you do not see him you're blind.—Dear father

Behold! see there!—I come, I come, ALPHONSO!

Receive me Heaven—and you—

STRENI.

STRENI.

Ah! hold her up!

She falls like one shot thro', the brain.

VICTORIA.

Alas!

She's dead! dead! dead!

STRENI.

'Tis but a fit I hope.—

Hold up her head.—Help, help! Oh all the world

To hear her speak again!—Ah me! that face

Is fix'd in death. She's cold, cold—poor OLYMPIA!

I've liv'd too long. She's gone, my faultless child

For ever gone—and I her murderer—Oh!

THE ALABAMA CEMENT CO. LTD.

MEMPHIS

1000 1/2 S. 1st St. Memphis, Tenn.

The Alabama Cement Co. Ltd.

VICTORIA

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

ALBANY

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

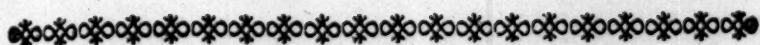
1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

1000 1/2 S. 1st St.

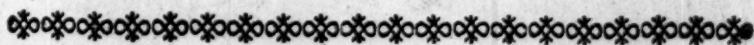


S K E T C H E S:
O R
E S S A Y S
O N
V A R I O U S S U B J E C T S.

By LAUNCELOT TEMPLE, Esq.

T H E F I R S T V O L U M E.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE YEAR MDCCLVIII.



VOL. II.

K

18

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTEN LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION

500 N. 5TH ST. NEW YORK, N. Y.

7 MAR 10 1891

RECEIVED

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTEN LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION

500 N. 5TH ST. NEW YORK, N. Y.

7 MAR 10 1891

RECEIVED

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTEN LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION

500 N. 5TH ST. NEW YORK, N. Y.

T H E
P R E F A C E.

THE Author of the following
Papers chuses to call them
SKETCHES; as the least imperfect
amongst them is to a laboured treatise,
what the painter's outlines, or his first
rude draughts, are to a finished picture.
This declaration, he hopes, will be
accepted by the proper judges of writing,
as a sufficient

ficient apology for any thing, either in thought or expression, that may be found careless or incorrect in his ESSAYS. He owns he could have given these little loose fragments much bolder strokes, as well as more delicate touches : but as an author's renown depends at present upon the mobility, he dreads the danger of writing too well ; and feels the value of his own labour too sensibly, to bestow it where, in all probability, it might only serve to depreciate his performance.

S K E T C H E S.

O F L A N G U A G E.

ALMOST every one that can read, pretends to judge of the author's style, as it is called: but how few are there who really know good language from bad! Even the best judges are sometimes divided in their opinions; for want, it would seem, of a common standard by which the merits of different languages, as well as of different writers in the same language, might be compared. If I was to reduce my own private idea of the best language to a definition; I should call it the shortest, clearest, and easiest way of expressing one's thoughts, by the most harmonious arrangement of the best chosen words, both for meaning and sound. The best language is strong and expressive, without stiffness or affectation; short and concise, without being either obscure or ambiguous; and easy and flowing and disengaged, without one undetermined or superfluous word.

OF GENIUS.

THERE is a standard of right and wrong in the nature of things, of beauty and deformity, both in the natural and moral world. And as different minds happen to be more or less exquisite, the more or less sensibly do they perceive the various degrees of good and bad, and are the more or less susceptible of being charmed with what is right or beautiful, and disgusted with what is wrong or deformed. It is chiefly this sensibility that constitutes genius; to which a sound head and a good heart are as essential as a lively imagination. And a man of true genius must necessarily have as exquisite a feeling of the moral beauties, as of whatever is great or beautiful in the works of nature; or masterly in the arts which imitate nature, in poetry, painting, statuary, and music.

On the other side, where the heart is very bad, the genius and taste, if there happen to be any pretensions to them, will be found shocking and unnatural. NERO would be nothing less than a poet; but his verses were what one may call most

wil-

villainously bad. His taste of magnificence and luxury was horribly glaring, extravagant and unnatural to the last degree.

CALIGULA's taste was so outrageously wrong, that he detested the works of the sweet MANTUAN poet more passionately than ever MOECENAS admired them; and if VIRGIL had unfortunately lived down to those times in which that monster appeared, he would probably have been tortured to death for no other crime but that he wrote naturally, and like an honest man.

True genius may be said to consist of a perfect polish of soul, which receives and reflects the images that fall upon it, without warping or distortion. And this fine polish of soul is, I believe, constantly attended with what philosophers call the moral truth.

There are minds which receive objects truly, and feel the impressions they ought naturally to make, in a very lively manner, but want the faculty of reflecting them; as there are people who, I suppose, feel all the charms of poetry without being poets themselves.

OF TASTE.

OUR notion of taste may be easily understood by what has been said upon the subject of genius ; for mere good taste is nothing else but genius without the power of execution.

It must be born ; and is to be improved chiefly by being accustomed, and the earlier the better, to the most exquisite objects of taste in its various kinds. For the taste in writing and painting, and in every thing else, is insensibly formed upon what we are accustomed to ; as well as taste in eating and drinking. One who from his youth has been used to drink nothing but heavy dismal port, will not immediately acquire a relish for claret or burgundy.

In the most stupid ages there is more good taste than one would at first sight imagine. Even the present, abuse it with what contemptuous epithets you please, cannot be totally void of it. As long as there are noble humane and generous dispositions amongst mankind, there must be good taste. For in general, I do not say always, the taste will
be

be in proportion to those moral qualities and that sensibility of mind from which they take their rise. And while many, amongst the great and the learned, are allowed to have taste for no better reason than that it is their own opinion, it is often possessed by those who are not conscious of it, and dream as little of pretending to it as to a star and garter. An honest farmer, or shepherd, who is acquainted with no language but what is spoken in his own county, may have a much truer relish of the *English* writers than the most dogmatical pedant that ever erected himself into a commentator, and from his *Gothic* chair, with an ill-bred arrogance, dictated false criticism to the gaping multitude.

But even those who are endued with good natural taste, often judge implicitly and by rote, without ever consulting their own taste. Instances of this passive indolence, or rather this unconsciousness of one's own faculties, appear every day; not only in the fine arts, but in cases where the mere *taste*, according to the original meaning of the word, is alone concerned. For I am positive there are many thousands who, if they were

to bring their own palate to a severe examination; would discover that they really find a more delicious flavour in mutton than in venison, in flounder than in turbut, and yet prefer middling or bad venison to the best mutton; that is, what is scarcest and dearest, and consequently what is, from the folly of mankind, the most in vogue, to what is really the most agreeable to their own private taste.

In matter of taste, the public, for the most part, suffers itself to be led by a few who perhaps are really no judges; but who, under the favour of some advantages of title, place, or fortune, set up for judges, and are implicitly followed even by those who have taste. These washy dictators have learnt at school to admire such authors as have for ages been possessed of an undisputed renown: but they would never have been the first to have discovered strokes of true genius in a contemporary writer, though they had lived at the court of AUGUSTUS or of Q. ELIZABETH.

So undistinguishing is our taste, that if the most torpid dunce this fruitful age can boast of, could by some artful imposture prepossess the public,
that

that the most insipid of all his own bread-sauce compositions, to be published next winter, was a piece of MILTON's, or any other celebrated author, recovered from dust and obscurity, it would be received with universal applause; and perhaps be translated into *French* before the town had doated six weeks upon it. One might venture to say too, that if a work of true spirit and genius was to be introduced into the world, under the name of some writer of low reputation, it would be rejected even by the greatest part of those who pretend to lead the taste. And no wonder, while an eminent vintner has mistaken his own old hock at nine shillings the bottle for that at five.

OF TURGID WRITING.

NOISE and bluster is what passes for sublime with the great majority of readers; and there are people who think nothing can be strong or solid but what is clumsy. Yet the genteel dignity of WHITEHALL, and the elegant chearful simplicity of St. PAUL's in COVENT-GARDEN, may stand as long as that purse-proud wittol the TREASURY, or even the squat solidity of the HORSE-GUARDS.

Unnatural, forced, exaggerated swelling, whether in sentiments or language, is owing to false taste and want of true genius. The *HERCULES* of *Goltzius* is that very sublime in person. It is intended to express the most excessive robustness of figure : but the painter, in endeavouring to represent the human form in its utmost degree of strength, has aggravated the demi-god into a mere awkward monster ; as ridiculous a giant as either of the brothers at *Guildhall*.

To take it in another view, that clumsy robustness of manner, which, by the way, does not partake of true vigour, for that always performs its business without straining, is the same thing to the spirited ease which is necessary to good writing, that the awkward efforts of a huge, heavy, ill-shaped dray-horse, and a lame one too, are to the easy actions of the most supple *ARABIAN* that ever was drest by *St. AMOUR*.

That writing can never be very good which is not easy ; but it does not follow that all easy writing is good. Writing may be very easy, and yet, heaven knows, very insipid. And when you begin to suspect that your writing is easy indeed but wants spirit, the wisest thing you can do is to let your pen drop and go to bed.

OF AFFECTATION OF WIT, AND
FLORID WRITING.

IT is not always so easy to get rid of an impertinent companion, as of a silly book ; otherwise, to be for ever aiming at Wit, would be as teizing and intolerable in writing as in conversation. Too much even of genuine Wit is cloying, and the vanity of displaying it incessantly will fatigue and disgust every reader whose taste is true. Olives, caveare, anchovies, and *Dutch* herrings, do very well in their place ; but, in the name of all the hospitable powers, don't oblige us to dine upon them. Let us first lay a foundation of good plain beef or mutton, if you please : for there is no living upon pickles or sweet-meats alone.

The ground-work of every performance, even of those which admit or require the greatest profusion of ornaments, ought to be plain and simple. Observe Nature : in the meadow, the sweet green, which never dazzles the sight, is the predominant colour ; while the gaudy flowers, red, white, yellow, blue, and purple, are carelessly interspersed.

This

This is infinitely more pleasing and beautiful than that insipid, childish, uncomfortable bauble called a flower-knot ; and the wild variety of the woods as far excels the richest plantation of flowering shrubs. I would not be above taking a hint even from the mechanic arts : if a suit of cloaths is overcharged with lace, it becomes taudry and ungenteel. In every work, the true taste is to dispose the ornaments with ease and propriety, and not to be affectedly or too ostentatiously prodigal of them. By this means you bestow upon your performance an elegant richness, and such a modest dignity as will please every true eye ; though it may quite escape the notice of the vulgar, and false critics of all ranks, who delight in nothing but what is glaring, tawdry, and ostentatious. — No, I beg their pardon : for they are sometimes in raptures, or seem to be so, with what is altogether insipid.

Let the ornaments be never so well executed, if they are not easily and naturally introduced, they will have an awkward effect. The most beautiful woman may disgust you by ostentation, and a declared intention to charm. As often as
it

it is possible to contrive it so, the ornaments should be, or at least appear to be, of some use towards the main design of the work: but when they are bluntly produced, and with too barefaced a purpose to dazzle or entertain, instead of your admiration, they raise your contempt. A masque, a coronation, or a procession upon our stage, is, for the most part, an insipid, tawdry, tiresome shew. But if it was really an ornament, to introduce it with propriety and grace, it ought to be contrived as an incident to help on the business of the piece: as in the masque in *ROMEO and JULIET*; and the funeral procession, such as it is, in *RICHARD the Third*; which, notwithstanding some want of *decorum*, as the critics call it, and of probability in the scene, has still some kind of pretence to assist in the business of the fable.

To conclude: The ornamental parts of a work cost the least trouble to a writer who has any luxuriance of imagination. To support the plain parts with an easy dignity, so as they shall neither become flat on the one hand, nor disgustingly stiff on the other, is a much more difficult task. And yet

yet if you succeed never so well here, you will receive little thanks from the generality of readers ; who will be apt to imagine they could easily perform the same kind of work themselves, till they come to try it.

OF OBSCURE WRITING.

AS the first end of all writing and speaking is to be understood, it seems to follow, that Obscurity must be the greatest fault in either. One would think it needless to insist upon this ; yet there are readers so absurd as to admire an author the more for every now and then plunging into the unintelligible : as a dash of mystery procures more reverence from weak minds to any scheme of religion, than its most virtuous or most rational precepts. Some clumsy scholars too, who must needs be making awkward love to the scornful Muses, and tumbling them with their coarse paws ; when they come to an obscure passage in an author, whom they are determined to admire, tell us we must not always expect the same clearness in writers of the first class as in the more inferior ones. Such is their cant even in
talking

talking of dramatic writing, in which Obscurity is more unpardonable than almost in any other kind of production. But the dullest and most shallow of those critics could write obscurely himself; and if he writes much, he must have *ill luck* not to do it sometimes. For to write obscurely requires no other talent or skill than to express one's meaning imperfectly; or if that is not enough, to write without any meaning at all. However, amongst a different kind of critics, perspicuity has always been reckoned an essential quality to good writing; and if sometimes a great author is found deficient in this article, it only shews how difficult it is to express some things with clearness and ease. For one may very safely presume that no good writer, where it was prudent to speak out, ever express himself obscurely from choice.

OF THE MODERN ART OF SPELLING.

AN author seems reduced to great extremities, who flies to new Spelling to distinguish himself.

These innovations are pedantic and conceited trifles; and the best, or rather the only good rea-

son for ever altering a long established Spelling is, that the writing may come the nearer to the pronunciation. But our reformers in the art of Spelling, who at present chiefly confine themselves to one class of words, to substantive nouns and verbs derived from the LATIN, such as *honour, favour, labour*, while they write *honor, favor, labor*, increase the distance between the writing and pronunciation, or rather they produce one where there was none before; for the *u* in all these words, except in a few where it is generally omitted in the common spelling, as *horror, terror*, is at least as much felt in the pronunciation as the retained vowel *o*. Some have, unhappily enough, subjected to the same innovation other words, which contain the dipthong *ou*, though they have no relation at all to the LATIN, and write *endeavour, neighbor, behavior*. Why don't they proscribe this hated *u* in *adjectives* too; and instead of *invidious, odious, glorious*, write *invidios, odios, glorios*? As they have gone so far, I can see no good reason why they should stop short here.

Trifles betray the character: and it is somewhat strange, if it has escaped the penetration of those philosophers

philosophers who have employed part of their talents in characterising the age, that there hardly needed any other instance to distinguish the present as an *unmanly* one than this very aversion to the honest vowel *u*; without whose assistance it would be impossible to pronounce some of the most important and most interesting words, to any thing of a man, in the whole *English* language. And it is not unworthy our observation here, that a late noble Author, whose parts were manly enough in the earlier days of his life, did not begin to *castigate* his Spelling after this manner, till he was considerably advanced in years.

OF NEW WORDS.

IT is the easiest thing imaginable to coin words. The most ignorant of the mobility are apt to do it every day, and are laughed at for it. What best can justify the introducing a new Word is necessity, where there is not an established one to express your meaning. But while all the world understands what is meant by the word *pleasure*, which sounds very well too, what occasion can there be for saying * *volupty*?

* See some posthumous works of a right honourable Author, published not many years ago in *defence* of our holy religion.

Nothing can deform a language so much as an inundation of new words and phrases. It is, indeed, the readiest way to demolish it. If there is any need to illustrate the barbarous effects which a mixture of new words must produce, only consider how a discourse, patched all over with sentences in different languages, would sound; or how oddly it would strike you in a serious conversation to hear, from the same person, a mixture of all the various dialects and tones of the several counties and shires of the three kingdoms: though it is still the same language. To make it sensible to the eye; how greatly would a mixture of *Roman, Italick, Greek, and Saxon* characters deform a page? A picture, imitating the style of different masters, which is commonly called a Gallery of Painters, can never be pleasing for the same reasons, want of union and harmony.

The present licentious humour of coining and borrowing words, seems to portend no good to the *English* language: and it is grievous to think with what *volupty* two or * *poetararorencouroac* eminent

* The word for the number *three*, in one of the *American* languages; which, to judge by this specimen, cannot be barbarous for want of polysyllables.

personages have *opiniatred* the *inchoation* of such *futile* barbarisms.

In short, the liberty of coining words ought to be used with great modesty. *Horace*, they say, gave but two, and *Virgil* only one to the *Latin* tongue, which was squeamish enough not to swallow those, even from such hands, without some reluctance.

I cannot conclude without putting our writers and speakers in mind of an excellent advice from *Mr. Pope*, on this subject of new and old words :

* *Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.*

OF SUPERANNUATED WORDS.

INSTEAD of creating a parcel of awkward new words, I imagine it would be an improvement to degrade many of the old ones from their peerage. I am but a private man, and without authority ; but an absolute prince, if he was of my opinion, would make it capital ever to say *encroach* or *encroachment*, or any thing that belongs to en-

* See *Mr. POPE's Essay on Criticism*.

croaching. I would commit *inculcate*, for all its Latinity, to the care of the pavours; and it should never appear above ground again. If you have the least sympathy with the human ear, never say *purport* while you breathe; nor *betwixt*, except you have first repeated *between* till we are quite tired of it. *Metbinks* strongly resembles the broken language of a German in his first attempts to speak English. *Metbought* lies under the same objection, but it sounds better.

It is full time that *froward* should be turned out of all good company, especially as *perverse* is ready at hand to supply his place. *Vouchsafe* is a very civil gentleman; but as his courtesy is somewhat old-fashioned, we wish he would *deign* or *condescend*, or *be pleased* to retire.

From what rugged road, I wonder, did *swerve* deviate into the English language? — But this *subject matter*! — In the name of every thing that is disgusting and detestable, what is it? Is it one or two ugly words? What is the meaning of it? Confound me if ever I could guess! Yet one dares hardly ever peep into a preface, for fear of being stared in the face with this nasty *subject matter*.

Wittol is an old-fashioned, ill-sounding word ; but as there is frequent occasion for it, and no other word so perfectly expresses its meaning, we cannot afford to part with it.

But to pick out all the awkward old words, which continue to be as current amongst us as the worn-out sixpences, it would be necessary to peruse the dictionary from A to Z. A most desperate uncomfortable labour ! As heart-breaking a task as it would be to wade through half a volume of the *Statutes at large* ; nay, by heaven, I would almost as soon take it upon me to read the most insipid tragedy that has been brought upon the stage these seven years. But if one could submit to this labour, and should presume to set a mark upon every word one did not relish, there may be people of a different opinion ; and no private person has authority enough to prohibit the use of any word, if he finds it ever so intolerable to his own ear. For my part, I shall endeavour to pass through life as inoffensively as possible, both to the world and my own conscience ; and hope, and pray, I may never be reduced to the necessity of using

* *One word, which dying, I would wish to blot.*

* See the Epilogue to Mr. Thomson's *CORIOLANUS*.

OF MUSIC.

MUSIC, I presume, can no further be properly called one of the imitative arts, than as it expresses the Passions; and in this respect only can be admitted, as the sister of Poetry and Painting. So that mere harmony has little pretension to such an alliance; for it is no more Music than mere versification is poetry.

The *Italian* compositions, for the most part, mean nothing beyond harmonious sound; and are as much inferior to whatever is truly pathetic in Music, as a tragedy, which depends upon noise and shew, is to a plain passionate one, which represents a natural and moving picture of life, and of the human mind. A family piece, even such a one as the celebrated work of *Vandyke* at *Wilton*; where, though the Drawing is exact, and the attitudes easy and natural, the figures are all gaping and unemployed; is a mighty tame performance when compared with a grand history by *Raphael*, *Rubens*, or the same *Vandyke* himself, where every thing is expressive, warm, passionate, and interesting.

But

But it is not even mere harmony ; difficulty of execution is the sublime, at which the greatest part of our modern masters aspire ; as if it required the least genius either to compose or execute difficult music. While these are the objects of emulation amongst our composers and performers, the opera is likely to *continue* a most ravishing entertainment.

We run mad, or rather foolish, after this imported music ; while we have much better of our own. Most of the modern *Italian* compositions only trifle with the ear : the *Welsh*, the *Scotch*, the *Irish* music, reaches the heart. The productions of our present *Italian* masters are thrummed over for a season, because they are new ; and forgot for ever afterwards, because when you have heard them twenty times, you find them still as insipid as at first. The music, which charmed these islands long before the boasted revival of this art in *Italy*, or rather in *Flanders*, is as established as the ancient classics ; and those compositions, short and simple as they are, never become threadbare, but give delight and rapture every time they are heard.

There

There is a certain resemblance of air between the music of the ancient *Britons*, the *Irish*, and the *Scotch*; and yet they are all very distinguishable from one another. There is a remarkable difference of character even between the music of the north and the south of *Scotland*. The northern is generally martial, for the most part melancholy, and bears a strong resemblance to the *Irish*: the southern is pastoral and amorous, with such an air of tender melancholy, as love and solitude, in a wild romantic country, are apt to inspire. Each of them has a wildness peculiar to itself. The wild spirit of the south breathes a sweeter air of rural solitude; that of the north is more solemn, and sometimes what one might almost call dreadful. Besides, the gay sprightly airs which each of them has produced, are in as different styles as the genius and manners of the people in the two extremities of *Scotland*, or the face of the countries they inhabit; both of which are wild, but I believe, with a very different air.

The *British* poetry is universally allowed, by the best judges of both, to be much superior to the *Italian*; and why should you wonder to find the

the music of the one country brought into competition with that of the other? The music of these islands seems to agree in character with that of the ancients; which, from the accounts we have of it, excelled in simplicity and passion. How simple the music must have been that delighted Greece in the days of *Alcæus*, *Sappho*, *Pindar*, and *Anacreon*, seems to appear from the very make of their capital instrument the Lyre.

OF ENGLISH VERSE.

RHyme, we have often been told, is a modern invention; though, if that was a crime, it might perhaps be proved to be not so very modern either. It is reckoned a barbarous one by some pedants; who finding, I suppose, from the opinion of better judges than themselves, that it is abominable in *Greek* and *Latin*, conclude that it must not be less so in *French* and in *English*. The contrary is evident to every one that has ears and dares think for himself: for in *English*, rhyme is capable of much harmony; and the *French* can have no versification without it. But some people, who ought to know better, seem to make no allowance

allowance for the original deference between one language and another; and are ready to quarrel with the *Engliſh* as a barbarous language, because it is not *Latin* or *Greek*. They do not consider that every language has powers and graces peculiar to itself; and that what is becoming in one would be quite ridiculous in another. Of this it is sufficient to produce one obvious example: the transposition of words, which gives such a grace and spirit to the *Greek* and *Latin* languages, and without which they would become detestably flat and insipid, does not at all suit the genius of the *Engliſh*; except sometimes in poetry: and, by the way, I am afraid there are too many ungraceful transpositions current amongst our *Engliſh* poets.

But it is not only a few obscure pedants who are thus dissatisfied with their mother-tongue; and would be glad for its improvement to torture it from its native shape, some into *Latin* and others into *French*: for attempts of this nature have been actually made by men of superior note. Sir *Philip Sidney*, who, notwithstanding his affected manner, must be allowed to have possessed a great share of genius, would every now and then spur up his
gallant

gallant *English* into a most unbecoming ridiculous trot after the *Greek* and *Latin* hexameters. It is certainly impossible to introduce the *Greek* and *Latin* measures into *English* poetry with any success; yet Sir *Philip* was fond of this project, and pursued it with a strange obstinacy. He recommended it to *Spencer*; but *Spencer* had too true an ear to relish such awkward unnatural versification, or countenance it by his example. At least there is nothing remains of him to shew that he ever practised it. There have been attempts made since to the same purpose by *Milton* and some later authors. But there never was any thing seen so ungraceful or so despicably pedantic as all essays of that kind which have hitherto appeared. I do not know that it has ever yet been tried, except by *Milton* in some parts of his *Samson*; but of all the *Greek* or *Latin* measures, the iambic seems the most capable of being adopted into the *English* poetry.

I have either read or heard that a poet of the last century, whom I shall not name, because I am not perfectly sure of the fact, pretended to some secrets in versification, which he did not chuse to communicate. If it was so, it shewed a jealousy
unworthy

unworthy of so great a master of numbers: he might safely enough, for his own superiority, have published those secrets whatever they were; for it is impossible they could ever be of much use. He could easily advise you to vary your pauses, and tell you which are the most graceful: but these and all such precepts are nothing to the purpose; a good ear will naturally produce harmony without the least regard or attention to rules; and there is no cure for a bad one. The only way to improve the ear, whether good or bad, is to accustom it to the most harmonious writing.

Blank verse admits of a greater variety of pauses than rhyme, and is partly for that reason the fittest for works of any considerable length. But in *English* poetry I question whether it is possible, with any success, to write odes, epistles, elegies, pastorals, or satires, without rhyme. And it happens luckily, that in these short pieces the ear has not time to be tired with the return of the chimes: which, in my humble opinion, had better sometimes play a little false to one another than be forever scrupulously exact; provided such licences never shock the ear.

It does not require a very exquisite ear to write two smooth or even harmonious lines running : yet in rhyme, a poet, who is always very careful to polish his couplet, may pass with the multitude for a great master in versification. But as long as his harmony is confined within such narrow bounds, he writes but like a school-boy, who keeps in the line only with the help of ruled paper.

Dr. *Swift* and Mr. *Pope* took offence, one does not know why, at the triplet, and very rarely condescended to admit it into their verse. It is true, it had been used to a nauseous excess by some tasteless writers ; and Mr. *Pope's* own imitation of *Rochester* might justly enough give him a disgust to the triplet for his whole life. Yet it contributes not a little to the grace of *Dryden's* versification : and I can see no reason why it should be prohibited now ; as it gives a variety to the numbers, which in rhyme are sufficiently limited to require such a help : besides it may often be in your power by its means to compress within three lines, what must otherwise straggle into four, and of course become languid and spiritless.

Variety

Variety is the soul of versification ; and the march of the lines ought to be adapted to the subject. The measure is the same in both ; but had *Horace* wrote his epistles or satires in the same kind of numbers with *Virgil's* *ÆNEID*, it would have been a monstrous impropriety ; like hunting the fox or hare on a war-horse, with the equipage of a general at a review, or on the day of battle. He knew very well, that in familiar writing dignity of versification would be quite ridiculous. Accordingly in those parts his numbers are loose, rambling, and often almost prosaic. But in his most careless and licentious periods he seldom or never hurts the ear : and as often as there is any thing great in his sentiment, his expression and numbers rise in proportion, and sustain themselves with a native unaffected dignity ; till without falling he descends on easy and dextrous wings to the familiar again.

It does not seem quite foreign to the present subject to take some notice of a certain *French* author, who after having given it as his opinion, that *Mr. Pope is the most harmonious of all the English poets*, adds, with a very plausible assurance, that *he has*
reduced

reduced the sharp hissings of the English trumpet to the sweet sounds of the flute *. It is no great wonder, that one who is apt to write much at random, should presume to talk so contemptuously of a manly, an elegant, and harmonious language, with which he plainly appears to have but a very superficial acquaintance. But who ever talked before of the *hissings of a trumpet*—or of *sharp hissings*? We have all heard of the *hoarse trumpet*, but the *hissing trumpet* is an instrument with which we are not yet acquainted. However, to pass these little improprieties, this compliment to Mr. Pope shews how well this critic is qualified to pronounce sentence upon the *English* poets. No one is more sensible than I am of Mr. Pope's merit; but his blindest admirer might startle at the preference bestowed upon him here. For, not to mention the great names of *Spenser*, *Shakespeare*, and *Milton*, upon such an occasion; let us only compare Mr. Pope in this point of view with a writer upon whom, as they say, he formed himself, and whom not only in his own opinion, but

* Mr. Pope—*Est, je crois, le poete le plus elegant, le plus correct, et ce qui est encore beaucoup, le plus harmonieux qu'ait eu l'Angleterre. Il a reduit les sifflemens aigres de la trompette Angloise au sons doux de la flute.* VOLTAIRE—*Lettres sur les Anglois.*

in that of many others, he is thought to have excelled in the art of verifying. It is almost needless, after this, to say that I mean *Dryden*; whose versification I take to be the most musical that has yet appeared in rhyme. Round, sweet, pompous, spirited and various; it flows with such a happy volubility, such an animated and masterly negligence, as I am afraid will not soon be excelled. From the fineness of his ear, his prose too is perhaps the sweetest, the most mellow and generous, that the *English* language has yet produced.

Had Mr. *Voltaire* known as much of the *English* poets as he pretends to do, he might have found something like the *sweet sound of the flute* in Mr. *Waller*; who wrote before Mr. *Pope* was born. Mr. *Voltaire*, before he presumed to compare the *English* poets, should have known, that before Mr. *Waller* appeared, there was one *Edmund Spenser* a poet, whose verse was not merely indolently smooth, but spirited also and harmonious. And if Mr. *Voltaire* was a perfect and a candid judge in this case, he would own, that there was more harmony in many of the *English* poets—much more than the French language can attain to, or

an ear debauched by the *French* versification is capable of relishing.

OF THE VERSIFICATION OF ENGLISH TRAGEDY.

THE greatest part of our modern writers of Tragedy seem to think it enough to write mere blank verse ; no matter however hard it be, however void of swelling and harmony. Even those of them who write the best numbers, study to be solemn and pompous throughout, and affect a monotony of heroic Versification, from the first appearance of the heroine with her confidante, to her last fatal exit ; without the least regard to the variety of passions, which express themselves in quick or slow, flowing or interrupted, in languishing or impetuous movements.

The proper Versification of *English* Tragedy is most certainly blank verse ; but as different from the solemn and majestic movement of heroic poetry as the Iambic is from the Hexameter. What a monstrous production would a *Greek* or *Latin* tragedy in Hexameter Verse appear !—The ancients found the grave Iambic their proper measure for

tragedy; as it is at the same time capable of all the dignity which that kind of poem requires, and descends with the greatest ease to the level of prose and conversation. Such as is the Iambic in *Latin*, is blank verse in *English*: but by no means the blank verse of *Paradise Lost*.

The numbers ought to be accommodated to the passion: and though in some parts of tragedy it is proper they should be slow, or solemn, or languishing, they ought for the most part to run somewhat rambling and irregular; and often rapid and subsultory, so as to imitate the natural cadence and quick turns of conversation.

Shakespear, who I will venture to say had the most musical ear of all the *English* poets, is abundantly irregular in his Versification: but his wildest licences seldom hurt the ear; on the contrary, they give his verse a spirit and variety, which prevents its ever cloying. Our modern tragedy-writers, instead of using the advantages of their own language, seem in general to imitate the monotony of the *French* Versification: and the only licence they ever venture upon, is that poor tame
one

one the supernumerary syllable at the end of a line; which they are apt to manage in such a manner as to give their verse a most ungraceful halt. But it is not want of ear alone which makes our common manufacturers of tragedy so insipidly solemn and so void of harmony : it is want of feeling. For let the ear be what it will, if the passions are warmly felt, they will naturally express themselves in their proper tones.

Tragedy requires a greater variety of numbers than any other poetical productions ; as it is the most agitated with different passions. The march of every poem of any considerable length, but chiefly of tragedy, ought to resemble the course of a river, through a large extent of country, diversified with plains, hills and mountains. The stream, according as the ground lies through which it flows, is either slow, smooth and solemn ; or brisk and sportful ; or rapid, impetuous and precipitate. Such and so various ought to be the Versification of tragedy ; instead of that stiff affected importance of movement, which is now absurdly and awkwardly supported through the whole course of these sublime performances.

But besides this studied dignity ; this inflexible gravity of pace ; this unvaried exactness of measure without spirit or harmony ; this immoveable hardness and want of fluctuation in the lines ; there is no language so unnatural as that you meet with in most of our modern tragedies. The characters they represent are too heroic, it would seem, and too much exalted above common life to speak *after the manner of men*. The misfortune is, most of our tragedy-writers labour with all their might, and keep themselves perpetually upon the rack, to say every thing poetically : for it never enters into their head, that the most natural is the most poetical way of saying common things ; except sometimes where you can properly raise your expression by an easy metaphor. Let the sentiments be such as best suit the character and situation, and they cannot be expressed with too much plainness and simplicity ; provided all vulgarisms are as much as possible avoided.

As to the Characters ; if it was not for a very few exceptions, one would think the art of drawing them was lost amongst our dramatic writers. Those that appear in most of our modern plays, tragedies

tragedies call them or comedies, are like bad portraits ; which indeed represent the human features, but without life or meaning, or those distinguishing strokes which, in the incomparable HOGARTH and in every great history painter, make you imagine you have seen such persons as appear in the picture. In short, those mechanical performances are as imperfect as unnatural representations of human life, of the manners and passions of mankind, as the *Gothic* knights which lie along in armour in the Temple church are of the human figure.

OF IMITATION.

THE humble vanity, as one may call it, of imitating another person's manner, is one great source of affectation ; which is generally ridiculous, and always disagreeable. A person whose natural turn is genteel, if he keeps good company, will insensibly acquire as much of their manner as becomes him ; but if he sets up any one as a pattern to be exactly imitated, his behaviour will grow constrained, stiff and affected. Such will be the constant success of so absurd an at-

tempt to confine the variety of nature ; which plainly intends that mankind should be distinguishable one from another by their air, voice, and manner, no less than by their faces.

A poet, a painter, or a player, that imitates closely will never excel ; and this will hold good in every thing else that belongs to genius. It is true, that education and study are necessary to the improvement of genius : but to this purpose it is sufficient to be familiarly acquainted with the greatest masters ; and the earlier in life the better. By this means, if you delight in them, and have any similitude with them, you will catch their graces without affecting it ; and your own original characteristical manner will still distinguish itself. But if you study to form yourself upon them, you become only a copy of a copy. The greatest of them excel by their happy skill in copying nature : and if you content yourself with servilely copying them, without drawing immediately from the common subject *nature* ; you will always be inferior to your original, and have no chance ever to produce any thing great or striking.

In

In the mean time I do not imagine that true genius was ever much hurt by imitating. For tho' it is natural for young people to imitate a favorite author at first, it is not probable that true genius will submit to be so fettered long.

OF WRITING TO THE TASTE OF THE AGE.

WHATEVER some have pretended, one may reasonably enough doubt whether ever an author wrote much below himself from any cause but the necessity of writing too fast. When this happens to a writer who, with the advantages of leisure and easy circumstances, is capable of producing such works as might charm succeeding ages, it is a disgrace to the nation and the times wherein such a genius had the misfortune to appear.

It belongs to true genius to indulge its own humour; to give a loose to its own fallies; and to be curbed, restrained and directed by that sound judgment alone which necessarily attends it. It belongs to it to improve and correct the public
taste;

taste ; not to humour or meanly prostitute itself to the gross or low taste which it finds. And you may depend upon it, that whatever author labours to accommodate himself to the taste of his age—suppose it, if you please, this present age—the sickly wane, the impotent decline of the eighteenth century : which from a hopeful boy became a most insignificant man ; and for any thing that appears at present will die a very fat drowsy block-head, and be damned to eternal infamy and contempt : every such author I say, though he may thrive as far as an author can in the present age, will by degrees languish into obscurity in the next. For though naked and bare-faced vanity ; though an active exertion of little arts, and the most unremitting perseverance in them ; though party, cabal, and intrigue ; though accidental advantages, and even whimsical circumstances ; may conspire to make a very moderate genius the idol of the implicit multitude : works that lean upon such fickle props, that stand upon such a false foundation, will not be long able to support themselves against the injuries of time. Such buildings begin to totter almost as soon as their scaffolding is struck.

But

But if you find it necessary to comply with the humour of your age ; the writing best calculated to please a false taste is what has something of the air of good writing, without being really so. For to the vulgar eye the specious is more striking than the genuine. The best writing is apt to be too plain, too simple, too unaffected, and too delicate to stir the callous organs of the generality of critics, who see nothing but the tawdry glare of tinsel ; and are deaf to every thing but what is shockingly noisy to a true ear. They are struck with the fierce glaring colours of old *Frank* ; with attitudes and expressions violent, distorted, and unnatural : while the true, just and easy, the graceful, the moving, the sublime representations of *Raphael* have not the least power to attract them. The bullying, noisy march in *Judas Macchabeus* has perhaps more sincere admirers than that most pathetic one in *Saul* : and in conversation pertness and mere vivacity is more felt by the general run of company than easy unaffected wit ; as flashy, bouncing, flatulent cyder boasts of more spirit than the still vigour of reserved *Madeira*.

But the easiest, as well as the most effectual way of writing to the bad taste of your age, is to set
out

out while your genius is yet upon a level with it. Accordingly, if you have a son who begins to display a hopeful bloom of imagination, be sure to publish, with all the advantages that can be procured, the very first essays of his genius. They will hardly be too good to please; and besides, they have a chance to be received with particular favour and admiration as the productions of a young muse. When he has thus taken possession of the public ear, he may venture, as his genius ripens, to do his best; he may write as well as he can, perhaps without much danger of sinking in reputation. The renown of his first crude essays will be sufficient to prejudice the mobility, great and small, in favour of the most exquisite pieces he can produce afterwards. But if he must live by his wit, the best thing you can do for him is to transplant him, as early as possible, to PARIS; where in the worst of days, in the most *Gothic* muse-detesting age, there is still some shelter afforded to the most delicate as well as the most uncommon flower that blossoms in the human mind. In that gay serene and genial climate the muses are still more or less cultivated, though not with the same ardour and passion in every age; as appears from the following

lowing passage translated from a * *French* author, who wrote about the beginning of the present century. “ Almost all the arts have in their turns
“ experienced that disgust and love of change
“ which is natural to mankind. But I don’t know
“ that any one of them has felt it more than Poetry;
“ which in some ages has been exalted to a triumphal height, in others neglected, discouraged
“ and despised. About sixty years ago, under the administration of one of the greatest geniuses
“ that ever *France* produced, poetry found itself
“ amongst us at its highest pitch of glory. Those
“ who cultivated the muses were regarded with
“ particular favour : this art was the road to fortune and dignified stations. But in these days
“ this ardour seems to be considerably abated.
“ We do not appear to be extremely sensible to
“ poetical merit, &c.”

* *Defense de la Poësie*; par M. l’Abbé *Messieu*. *Memoires de Literature*, Tome 2de.

OF PHYSIOGNOMY, OR THE SIMILITUDE BETWEEN THE PERSON AND THE MIND.

THAT the face is a false glass is a vulgar error, and seems to have taken its rise from a few exceptions: for all mankind are so much physiognomists that whoever happens to find himself mistaken, though but for once, joins the cry of the proverb. All are not alike skilled in faces, any more than in unravelling of characters; even the most penetrating eye may be mistaken: yet I will presume to say, that the face is seldom a false glass; and when it proves so, it is generally the fault of the beholder. Perhaps indeed nature has made some cheats, some to appear worse, many much better than they are. This is of a piece with her usual variety, and was perhaps partly intended to check the presumption of mankind in judging too rashly of one another. Yet still the face is not a false glass: On the contrary, where the qualities of the mind are eminent, it generally shews them. For the features of the mind commonly follow those of the face; as the figure of most animals, whose characters are strong, is expressive of their nature. Though you had never
heard

heard of a lion, a tiger, a serpent, or an alligator, it is natural to think you would at the first sight be afraid of them rather than of a hare, or even a horse, whose appearance might prove formidable, but more from his size than his make.

The mind is for the most part visible in the person. Thus, a bearish figure is almost certainly the rhind or husk of a rude rough soul, never to be polished by any cultivation. If you find any sweetness in the kernel of such a rugged shell, it is more than you ought to expect; for a man is one thing, and a chesnut another. The voice too is in general harsh or sweet, conformably to the features; and where faces resemble one another, you'll perceive a remarkable similitude in the voice.

Sense and virtue are often to be found under a plain face and clumsy figure; but elegance and delicacy of mind generally appear in the person. Where a false and specious elegance appears in the face, you may expect the same in the mind; and the herd of mankind will admire them more than the true. Sometimes you meet with a delicate and elegant mind under a face that cannot properly

properly be called handsome: but then you will generally observe a spirit and expression in such a face that pleases a true eye much more than mere regular beauty; for the best part of beauty is air, meaning and expression.

The ancient *Greeks*, besides their being the most ingenious and elegant, were the most beautiful race of mortals that ever appeared in the world. The modern *Greeks* preserve the fine mould of their ancestors; and, if they were blest with liberty, would probably in a short time exceed all their neighbours in every excellence that human nature can boast of, whether ornamental or solid. Exquisite organs are, I believe, for the most part, beautiful too; and it is better to have a handsome ear than a very large one. Though the latter is by the laws of the animal œconomy more favourably contrived for the over-hearing of a whisper.

It is a common observation, that the painter constantly draws the finest *hands* whose own is of an elegant make. This is universally ascribed to a cause which is perhaps more obvious and plausible than true: for the painter often draws a hand in attitudes in which he never sees his own. It

was probably more owing to something within themselves, than to the different styles of nature to which they were accustomed, that RUBENS and RAPHAEL are so different in their ideas of beauty and their representations of the human form. VANDYKE studied under RUBENS; and as he lived in the same country, was accustomed to the same kind of objects with his master: yet their works are as different as their persons were; the one robust, but rather clumsy; the other handsome and genteel. In short, the productions of the genius seem to be a kind of propagation, and bear a family resemblance to the parent.

OF PREJUDICES, POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS, OR NATIONAL.

THIS ungenerous spirit, these ill-natured humours are so extremely absurd, that if strong instances of them were not seen every day, it would be impossible for a man of sense to believe them. For my own part, if I am totally free from any of the common weaknesses of mankind, I take it to be this. What is it to me what any man's principles are as to religion or government? He

has perhaps as good a right as I, perhaps a better, to keep steady to the principles in which he was educated. My religion may, for want of early instruction, appear as strange to him as his can to me. These things are all merely accidental and the effect of education: for a hot-headed churchman, bred at any protestant university, or the sourest christian that ever dissented from the orthodox church of *England*, would have been as violent a Mahometan, if he had received his system of religion from the MUFTI at *Constantinople*. Can it be supposed, that heaven puts itself at the head of any religious party!—I humbly think it appears plainly enough, that the Almighty who displays such infinite variety in all his works, no more intended that all mankind should be of the same religion, than that they should all be of one colour, speak the same language, observe the same customs, and wear the same dress: and it is not less reasonable than charitable to believe, that the virtuous of all religions are equally acceptable to the universal Father. For little as we know of heaven, I hope we may, without any blasphemy, presume that the superior powers are at least as reasonable as the best of *us*.

It

It is still not quite out of nature for people in certain humours, whether from the wine or the weather, to grow sour to one another for matters of mere opinion; nay, and proceed to downright quarrelling, either for the glory of God, or their own vanity. But the utmost effort of narrow-thinking, and what appears perfectly astonishing, is the aversion which some people bear in their minds to all those who did not happen to be born on the same spot, in the same little island, or the same corner of an island with themselves. Good God! would you have all the world to have been born in *Ireland*? In the name of every thing that is whimsical, what does it signify where a man was born? Can it be either a merit or a crime, an honour or a disgrace, to have been born in any particular spot of this globe; were it in *St. Giles's*, the *Old Bailey*, or even within the execrable walls of *Newgate* itself? One would think they must be at a prodigious loss for some thing to value themselves upon who are proud of the place of their birth. Most people pretend to laugh at what is called family pride: and yet, though according to nice herald-like ceremony, the son, as the better gentleman, ought to take the wall of the father; this kind of pride is perhaps not quite a proper object of ridicule: for whoever

esteems himself upon account of his noble ancestry, must of course emulate their virtues, and be afraid to violate their memory by any action unworthy of them. It is needless, and might be mistaken for flattery, to produce the many shining examples of this generous emulation which adorn the present age. Even without any very distinguishing merit of his own, the son has often some claim to a favourable reception for the sake of his father. But he stands upon a very bleak situation who has nothing to shelter him from contempt but the name of his country. For heaven's sake what country is it the most honourable to have been born in? What climate? What latitude?—Under the Equator? Or what particular distance from it? I hope it is not in those climates where the weather is the finest, and the seasons the most agreeable. But is there a country, at least in *Christendom*, where the generality of the people, rough as they run, are not as stupid and as wicked as the arch enemy of mankind would wish to make them? The great bulk of the *Irish*,—I'm sorry to say it,—are bad enough, very ragged cattle indeed; it is in vain to deny it—The general run of the *Scotch*, as well as of the *French*, *Spaniards*, and *Italians*, is so very, so extremely little better,
that

that it might puzzle the most sagacious connoisseur to pronounce which is worst—The *English*, though for every kind of merit, as estimable as any nation in *Europe*, are, with regard to the great majority of their individuals, just as unhappy as the rest. God preserve us ! what strange animals, what shabby christians have had the honour to be born in the metropolis of *Great Britain* !—of reputable, most reputable parents too !—in this very *London* ! and not to talk of *Rag-fair* or *Drury-Lane*, in the superb neighbourhood of *Grosvenor-square*, and *St. James's* itself.

But the merit or value stamped upon any animal from the meridian of its nativity, is not more fantastical than that which it receives from the place of its education. Yet there are thousands who dream, that no science is to be learnt but within those very walls whence after many years residence themselves had come into the world with a moderate enough share of erudition. It would be highly unreasonable to reflect upon any school because a great number of dunces happened to have been bred there : but people of this narrow way of thinking are really a reproach to their tutors. One would be sorry to see any illiberal jealousy

rife amongst our universities for such a simple dispute (a yet *tetrior quam teterrima belli causa*) as which of them has sent out the most numerous herd of learned blockheads. For any blockhead, whose genius leads him to much poring over heavy volumes, may become a man of great learning in the most illiterate ground, in the most unconsecrated you can name. But for their own sakes it is to be hoped, that those learned bodies will agree to suppress all animosities of this nature; lest in the course of their altercations it should be discovered, that all those seminaries of learning, however dignified with the specious titles of academies, colleges, or universities, are mere artful impositions upon the ignorance of mankind. For there are many instances to prove with what small helps from education good natural parts may shine: and a man may turn out a very considerable blockhead without ever having been taught metaphysics.

As the most hopeful antidote to the poyson of this very domestic education, one would prescribe a visit to foreign parts. And if after a ramble through *Europe*, the obstinate malignity should still shew itself in fresh eruptions, it might be worth

worth while to try a seven years residence in *America*: if the patient returns before he is thoroughly cured, I can see no good reason why he should not be transplanted for life.

But a strong obstacle to the cure of this folly, is the advantage which some *honest* people find in fomenting it. For the mob, I mean the great bulk of mankind, in judging of men are mere botanists: they distinguish them only by their outward types; the class or tribe they belong to, or *seem* to belong to. For want of being able to penetrate a little deeper into the character, they prefer a man for the cock or no cock of his hat, or the healths he toasts; and are the more obstinate in their attachment to him, the less reason they can give for it. As the votaries of any religion are the more zealous and violent, the further its principles are removed from common sense.

To conclude, as we begun, with Religion, It is nothing to me in whom or in what any man believes. I have no objection in the world to an honest man, because he believes in MAHOMET, as long as he gives himself no impertinent trouble about my faith. Nay, I could live upon good

terms even with a Deist : provided he keeps within the bounds of decency ; and does not carry with him through life that juvenile vanity, which will not suffer him to be quiet, till he has told all the world, that he laughs at those things which they consider as the most sacred and inviolable.

OF MORAL ATTRACTION AND REPULSION.

Oderunt bilarem tristes, tristemq; jocos,
Sedatum celeres, agilem gnarvumq; remissi.

HOR.

The fullen hate the gay, the gay the sad,
The slow the active, and the quick the staid.

THIS was observed by one who knew mankind as thoroughly as most writers. And it is an observation that may justly be extended to all people of opposite dispositions. For every knave naturally hates an honest man ; and the dimmest most misty blockhead has penetration enough, except you would rather call it instinct, to discover a man of parts ; and cold virulence enough to detest him. The miser abhors the man who generously enjoys his fortune ; and hopes to see the prodigal starve. As this is the case, it would

would require some skill in the doctrine of chances, to calculate how many enemies a man of sense and integrity is likely to have for one friend.

On the other hand, people of similar characters are apt to like one another. There is not a genuine ruffian in *Turkey*, not even in *Christendom*, so abandoned to all sense of humanity, so void of all sympathy with the human-kind, that would not take some little pains at least to favour the escape of the wretch who had just murdered his father. Upon these two principles of aversion and attachment, if they are not rather, in the present view, one and the same, it is probable that the most important of human affairs sometimes depend. It is perhaps more owing to this than to any single cause besides, that one age is so different from another. For a very few individuals in a nation may have influence enough to throw the great weight of its business into such hands as shall render it either glorious or contemptible, either miserable or prosperous.

But it is now full time to conclude: for when the writer is tired, it is highly probable the reader must begin to yawn, if he is not fast asleep already.

ready. For which reasons, what I had further to say shall be dispatched in as few words as possible, and without any over-scrupulous attention to method or regularity.

SENTENCES.

THE sententious manner of writing is apt to be dry, and to give disgust by its oracular air, and a dogmatical over-bearing pretension to wisdom. Perhaps it would be better, if its severity was alleviated with a comfortable mixture of human nonsense. For, to be perpetually *wise*, is forbidding, unsocial, and something that does not become human nature; as it does not belong to it. Why should a school-master, a parson, or an apothecary, affect to be as solemn and sublime the whole year round, as if he was a seraph or an archangel come to *dwell amongst us*?

The world has been shamefully imposed upon by many an important fool: but no man of sense ever took any pains to appear wise; as no honest man ever used any tricks to display his own integrity.

Most

Most fools, and many sensible people, are conceited: but people of the best sense never are so.

Affectation labours with a diligence that fatigues every spectator, but with infallible success, to defeat its own purpose; for instead of creating love or admiration, it provokes our aversion and contempt. The most amiable people are always the least affected. Let us make the best of what nature has done for us: she may be improved, but all attempts to alter her from her original shape will only expose us to ridicule. That awkward beast the dromedary, as long as he has any sense, will never pretend to be a BAJAZET or an OTHELLO.

I knew a poor gentleman who used to be grievously tormented with violent fits of the head-ach, because a celebrated poet was subject to that complaint. Such a head-ach I suppose as JUPITER felt just before he was delivered of PALLAS by the rough midwifery of VULCAN's hammer; which seems to give a broad hint towards the cure of this kind of *Cephalalgia*, as the learned doctors delight to call it.

Affectation

Affectation is the bane of every thing. An honest, plain, downright blockhead, supposing him at the same time good-natured, may not only be an useful but an agreeable creature. But when a blockhead is seized with the whim of being a fine gentleman or a wit, the Lord have mercy upon him—and us.

I am not offended at the insipidity of r. MFITZ DOTTERELL's observation, nor even at its impertinence, because I know he meant me no harm : what provokes me, is that he calls it a joke.

A fellow who, without a grain of wit or humour, will always be joking, is not only a disagreeable and contemptible companion, but a dangerous one. For his awkward, unwary nonsense will be apt one time or another to make him stumble into a quarrel ; and he may lose his friend, or perhaps his life, without the satisfaction of having had a good joke for it.

T'other bottle won't do—No, nor the other hoghead neither—You great pale-eyed logger-head, you must have patience—You must wait a good while before you rouse Mr. TRUEWIT'S mettle.

mettle—A long time, indeed!—You must wait till your own wit begins to sparkle—I am afraid you must wait till you're gone.—There is a secret power in your presence enough to check every thing that's genial—You are worse than a fog or the east wind—The candles burn dim while you're here—and the burgundy drinks as flat as port. Good night. Here's to your good repose. May you sleep like any porpus!—But hark ye, good Mr. VAN NUMB, before you go—You can't live without wit it seems—Bless your fat head! are you sure that you know wit when you hear it?—Let me be curst if you do, even when you pore over it in print at the rate of an octavo page in an hour.

It is illiberal, inhuman, and unreasonable in the highest degree to insult any man for his being dull: but when dullness pretends to genius or parts, it becomes a fair object of ridicule.

True satire may be called the rage of probity, and even of good-nature. It is the indignation of virtue and wit against vice, ill-nature, and affectation.

From

From wit to metaphysics is a desperate stride, yet we will venture it rather than defer our opinion of this science to any future occasion. We take metaphysics, in the degree to which they are carried by certain philosophers, to be *the art of talking grave nonsense upon subjects that lie beyond the reach of the human understanding*. Better talk about the weather still; or blunder through the mist of politics; or retail those insipid daily lies we call *news*.

I have seen people, that were no fools, laugh at the wrong place, and without being tickled, that they might not appear dull at taking a joke. What is worse, I have known people, who were not quite fools neither, affect to be angry without feeling any affront; because they would not be thought to want apprehension or spirit.

Vanity, besides the secret pleasure it gives one's self, is a very thriving quality; and it is not politic to be at any pains to disguise it, except amongst people of the best sense. For the generality of the world will have the same opinion of you that you seem to have of yourself.

False

False or middling genius is almost always arrogant and vain. The true may be provoked to do itself justice ; but is seldom apt to overvalue itself.

Though vanity and pride are very different things, we may talk here of that kind of pride which hurts your inferiors ; and keeps those at a distance who are never likely to abuse your familiarity. It seems to be the consciousness of little minds, who are afraid of being seen too near. It is to be proud only where you may, with the utmost safety, be so ; for *those* proud people are almost always mean and servile to such as rank above themselves.

Now that we are talking of unreasonable animals : there is a waspish fellow who must discharge his venom where he dares ; and every day uses you like a dog—because he's your *cousin* truly, and may be free with you. When the wind is easterly this *cousin* becomes absolutely intolerable. Perhaps, after all, he intends you no great mischief in the main. But, in my opinion, the best way to manage such a *cousin* is to give him a most inhuman threshing. He'll bounce, and fling, and

raise a cursed outcry ; but don't spare him : for with heaven's blessing it will do him an infinite deal of good ; and make him as civil, till he begins to forget it, as the politest enemy you ever had the happiness to converse with. Besides, you'll find a sublime pleasure in the exercise of just vengeance—By all that's imperial, it is a luxury almost too high for a subject !

Superficial people are always the most ostentatious. I suppose you may remember that you used to be the fondest and most vain of the thing you were but just beginning to learn.

Many shallow people make their fortunes by the mere force of gossiping. With some it passes for knowledge of the world ; whereas it is only practising an art which, though insupportably tedious and insipid to men of taste and spirit, instead of costing *them* any trouble, is their native element ; for they were born gossips.

The blunt sword is the trusty weapon. And there is nothing so infallibly successful in all trades and professions as the parts of a blockhead ; plodding, selfishness, cunning, and impudence :
which

which last virtue may be reckoned the chief of these cardinal ones; for

Nullum numen abest si sit IMPUDENTIA.

The ambition of a man of parts is often disappointed for the want of some common quality, with whose assistance very moderate abilities are capable of making a great figure.

Some people have just parts enough to do their country a great deal of mischief: for if their understanding was the smallest degree lower, it would be too glaringly ridiculous to employ them.

Some have died upon the scaffold for their faithful services to their ungrateful country. You remember the shocking catastrophe of those great and good men the DE WITS.—By all that's stern and horrible! by the black-hung room! by the blood-thirsty saw-dust! you're in the right—The surest way to avoid ingratitude, is never to do one good thing while you live.

Many excellent geniusses have been lost. But we ought not to repine too much at this seeming inattention of providence to human affairs; as

from the same cause perhaps a much greater number of shocking monsters have been smothered and suppressed. For I am afraid there are more NEROS and CARACALLAS than TITUSES or TRAJANS in private life, who want nothing but to be emperors to shew themselves. Immortal gods! how many thousand CLAUDIUSES *are at this hour asleep between HYDE PARK CORNER and WAPPING!*

I am afraid it is easier to corrupt good natural dispositions by education and habit than to subdue bad ones.

There are people that were born lyars; who tell you every day very seriously a parcel of insipid unmeaning lies, and probably believe them. It is a mere odd kind of weakness in them; they cannot help it; perhaps they are not sensible of it. Nay, I don't know whether there is not such an absurd creature as a thief that has little more scheme or meaning than a pilfering jackdaw.

Though there are strange inconsistent mixtures in human nature, there never yet was a very fine understanding where the heart was bad.

There is a parcel of crazy worthless people who set up for wits, and bring the name of POET under a kind of disgrace with those who do not know that there can be no true genius without a sound understanding and an honest heart.

Some of those people do more indiscreet, irrational, absurd things than even nature prompts them to : some become fots, and affect every thing that is indecent and shocking, merely that they may pass, good God ! for men of genius ; and they are admitted as such by the majority of their acquaintance for no other reason.

Oddities and singularities of behaviour may attend genius ; when they do, they are its misfortunes, and its blemishes. The man of true genius will be ashamed of them : at least he never will affect to distinguish himself by whimsical particularities.

In short, good sense is the solid foundation of all genius, and of every thing that is truly ornamental. It is necessary, in some degree, even to a good fiddler : still more so to one who composes

music. A blockhead, drunk with mortal port, might have drawled out such a pitiful strain as *God save our noble King*,—or *To Arms*, and *Britons strike Home*; but he must have had taste and genius who composed *Joy to great Cæsar*, or even *The Early Horn*.

Except HANDEL'S Oratorio one seldom goes to a musical entertainment where the great bulk of the pieces is not insipid. They have plenty of good music, but the performers are most provokingly frugal of the best. The reason I plainly take to be this: almost every scraper upon the violin has perhaps composed more or less musick himself; and, instead of the works of the great masters, they entertain you with their own. If reading was a public entertainment; if authors were the only readers, and the choice were left to them, I suppose the great writers of former ages would soon be forgotten.

It is a question with me, whether the music of a country is to be performed any more than its language pronounced to perfection, but by those that have been young in it; or, what comes
nearly

nearly to the same thing, have been taught it young by a native of that country.

People of the finest ear very often have not the least turn to mimickry : while, on the contrary, some of the best mimicks are mis-tuned, and have not the least ear to harmony.

It is impossible to make such a definition of wit as shall comprehend every kind of it. But it seems to consist chiefly in a happy faculty of comparing * distant objects, and surprising you with the discovery of a striking resemblance where you did not dream of finding any.

The wit of some, who have a large share of it, is too much of one kind, and proves cloying for want of variety.

An author, who affects to be fine in every thing he says, and to write above his subject, is just as

* In some ingenious essays, which appeared a few years ago in one of the daily papers, wit was called *a tall faculty of the mind*. There is something odd in the expression, but the meaning is good.

ridiculous a coxcomb as he who performs the most indifferent actions with a studied grace. And this affectation is one principal cause of the awkward unnatural language, which prevails in most of our modern tragedies.

Mr. *Voltaire* observes very justly of some authors, that they have done themselves no good by endeavouring to be universal. It is a foolish enough piece of vanity to be sure; for it requires no great genius to write a spiritless ode, an affected epistle, an insipid satire, a flat comedy, a cold tragedy, and even a flimsy, foppish, uninteresting epic poem. *SHAKESPEAR* perhaps possessed the greatest compass of genius that ever man did, and could excel in every thing, from the noblest sublime down to the burlesque.

In some ages the few people of genius ought to publish just enough to shew what they could have done in better times: more is not worth their while.

If there wants any thing besides the applause of the best judges to establish the reputation of your performance,

performance, it is the dislike of the worst. For false taste, whatever it may pretend, though it may even impose upon itself, at its heart naturally hates true genius.

I have heard talk of an ITALIAN who thought the foldier in VANDYKE'S BELISARIUS something quite wonderful from a FLEMISH painter. It would seem he had never heard of one RUBENS, a native of FLANDERS, who, *take him for all in all*, weigh him in the nicest *ballance*, is perhaps inferior to few painters that ITALY has produced. True taste is always candid, and naturally delights in true genius, without ever enquiring from what soil it sprung.

I have been told, that some *French Abbé*, whose name I forget, pronounces, with a very decisive air, that SHAKESPEAR understood all the passions but *love*.—Good God!—SHAKESPEAR not understand *love*!—Who does then?—VOLTAIRE?

Love, anger, grief, all the passions are contagious.

Love is the cause of more indiscretions in old people perhaps than in young.

DR. SWIFT says, that no wise man ever wished himself younger. The dean might perhaps have excepted a man renowned for wisdom, who seems to have been gloomy and unhappy in his latter years merely for want of youth.

Died by the sting of a snail would sound oddly in the bills of mortality. Yet I have known a woman of beauty, sense, and spirit, in love with one of the most insipid fellows that ever glared weary stupidity from a large dead eye. Whence it appears, that the infatuation of queen MAB in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, however extravagant it seems, is not quite out of nature.

As there have been many *small* observations made upon *great* classics, I must take the liberty to venture one. *Iago* ends his description of a good woman with

She was a wight, if ever such there were—

Here he stops, and *Desdemona* asks, *To do what?* It does not appear what leads her to this question, except

except you add a little word, which seems to have dropt out of its place here without being missed.— Suppose it was to be read thus :

She was a wight, if ever such there were,

To—

Here the buffoon pauses, to draw the lady into the question, which it is now natural for her to make ; and to give, what he is ready to add, its full effect of surprising and disappointing archly.

*Iago. She that was ever fair, and never proud,
Had wit at will, and yet was never loud ; &c.*

She was a wight, if ever such there were,

To—

Desd. To do what ?—

Iago. To suckle foals, and chronicle small-beer.

Why do the players, in the part of Richard the Third, always say, *Give me a horse.* It not only sounds much better, but the meaning is, in my opinion, more warm and spirited as it stands in Shakespear.

Give me another horse— Bind up my wounds—

As I feel it, there is a kind of tame impropriety, or even absurdity, in that action of HAMLET
where

where he pulls out the two miniatures of his father and uncle. It seems more natural to suppose, that HAMLET was struck with the comparison he makes between the two brothers, upon casting his eyes on their pictures, as they hang up in the apartment where this conference passes with the queen. There is not only more nature, more elegance, and dignity in supposing it thus ; but it gives occasion to more passionate and more graceful action, and is of consequence likelier to be as SHAKESPEAR's imagination had conceived it.

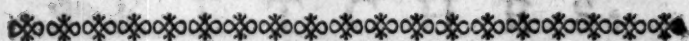
But I beg pardon for these trifles : and, in hopes that you may not all be so ill-natured as to take me at my word, shall conclude with a scrap of Latin that has, like many others, led a weary life ; though it is almost as insipid a thing of the kind as ever came upon the town —

Nos hæc novimus esse nihil.

Which, in plain English, means no more than that, *I am sensible all these SKETCHES and SENTENCES are mere nothing.*

ERRATUM.

The running-title of the foregoing Essays should have been
SKETCHES: OR ESSAYS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

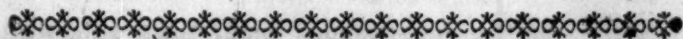


S K E T C H E S :
O R
E S S A Y S
O N
V A R I O U S S U B J E C T S .

BY
LAUNCELOT TEMPLE, Esq.

THE SECOND VOLUME.

NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.



celebrated for wisdom, thought it an object of the utmost consequence to a whole kingdom, to put a stop at once to the further growth of its capital. In a very populous and over-grown city, especially if it happens to be the seat of an extensive commerce, great multitudes of people, without either education or good natural sense, must grow rich. These, in all popular dissensions, will generally throw their weight into the wrong scale; will join the clamour against the most salutary measures; raving for things unreasonable, impracticable, and what, with better eyes, they would often see detrimental and pernicious to themselves. Yet such heads as these lead the rest of the nation, who consider them as their true and incorrupted source of political intelligence; their vigilant guardians, their safe protectors; the soundest, ablest, and most disinterested judges of whatever belongs to the management of national affairs. — God knows to what a contemptible degree they are mistaken! — For there is nothing more true, than that the inhabitants of a certain metropolis are, in general, not only the most brutal, indecent, and immoral, but the most stupid and ignorant, of the whole people throughout the kingdom.

Oh!—to any one who feels for the honour and dignity of England, what a subject of shame and mortification it must be, that the bad manners of those who inhabit the capital, expose the whole nation to the contempt of all foreigners!—Oh! good God! to the contempt of all Europe; who must naturally form an unjust opinion of the more civilized and more sensible people in all the most distant corners of the kingdom, from what passes *here*. Where the master of the house is a clown, the whole family partakes in his disgrace; and is even apt to be infected by him. Pray don't call the people of this Town *Englishmen*—For the honour of *England*, call them *Londoners* for ever—The yesty dregs of Great-Britain and Ireland, the frothy scum of every nation in Europe, of every province in America, fermenting with the * *Gowk spittle* of Jamaica, is their composition. Such *Englishmen* as these *Londoners*—good heaven!—are the only real enemies of *England*; which never can be ruined, but by their stupidity, their absurdity, their

* This is the name by which the country people in Scotland call the white frothy substance, the nest, in which the gnats eggs are hatched amongst the branches of the sorrel and other plants.—*Gowk* is their common word for the *Cuckoo*.

madness and villainy.—In this blessed meridian of LIBERTY, the French protestants too; whose fathers, within the memory of some that are yet alive, fled hither for shelter from an inhuman persecution; are become, of a most humble colony of suppliants, a gang of profligate ruffians, that madly and ungratefully rebel against a government, to which they owed their protection then, and do to this day. In their own original country, the wheel, instead of the gallows, would long ago have put an end to *their* turbulence.

VOX POPULI VOX DEI.

THIS sentence must have been first roared out by an impudent leader of some villainous faction: and it is surprizing that even the implicit indolence of sensible people should, to this day, have permitted it to pass without the least examination.—What?—*The cry of the stupid, ignorant, profane populace, who constitute the great majority of mankind, the voice of God!*—Heaven preserve us!—But this horrible blasphemy has been so long familiar to our ears, that we hear it without shuddering, and even acquiesce in it. If those blind gentry are ever in the right, it must be by chance, and

and they have only stumbled upon it. The tools of knaves must always be in the wrong ; and even when left to themselves, the multitude hardly ever fail to be mistaken.

For instance, of all those who have, in almost every various denomination, from time to time, become favourites with the vulgar here, great and small, within this present century, how few will be remembered in the next, except with contempt and infamy !—Of those idols, from the most exalted stations downward to the meanest ; from the monarch's palace down to the tradesman's kitchen, how few have not already survived their false renown, rotted alive, and discovered their deformities naked enough to be perceived by the blindest populace that ever disgraced human nature ! who at the same time, are never, by any experience, any disappointments, or the most flagrant discoveries, to be cured of their natural propensity to this absurd and fatal idolatry. This stupid idolatry is indeed the only religion that now remains to them. Yet, void as they are both of religion and morals, any cunning impudent knave might so operate upon their stupidity and ignorance, as to throw them all into a holy ferment again, by screaming out that *the church is in danger*.

OF THE PRESS.

THE liberty of the press is gone, was not long ago wantonly bawled out every night and morning from the lurking holes of Grubstreet, from the Fleet, the King's-bench, the Marshalsea, and perhaps from Newgate itself, by a parcel of factious scribblers; who, at the same time, were weekly and daily flinging about such indecent abuse, and such impudent pernicious lies, as no wise government, except the present, in any country, or in any age, would, for its own dignity, or the peace, harmony, and happiness of society, have suffered. That the liberty of the press is gone, was, indeed, too true, at the time when this impudent disingenuous complaint was the most clamorous — But how? and in what sense? — The daily and weekly conveyers of political intelligence, had, for a long time, almost universally, as I am told, shut up their *channels* to truth and common sense; at least they seldom suffered any thing of that kind to pass. They conveyed nothing almost but impudent lies, nonsense, and villainy; which indeed is too much the case to this day.

I have

I have for a long time, in sad earnest, considered the art of printing as a most pernicious invention. It puts it in the power of every block-head and scoundrel to propagate stupidity, brutality, bad morals, deceit, and imposture, throughout the land. In short, the present indecency and licentiousness of the press, most evidently tends to the abolishing of its liberty; and that of the whole nation.

OF THE POOR.

IN any country, opulent or not, it is a disgrace to government, that any one, who dares to claim its protection, should ever perish for want of necessaries. There ought to be no distress from want. Employ the poor that are able to work; supply the infirm and superannuated with a comfortable subsistence. The greatest miseries of life are often not to be cured, not even to be soothed, by all the advantages of wealth. And what a shameful inhuman crime it is to neglect those to which a wise police could always apply an infallible remedy!

I say again, there ought to be no distress from want. Employ your poor that are able to work.—

But we cannot oblige a *free-born Briton* to work, if he is ever so poor—God forbid!—But why?—You can confine this son of freedom in a nasty goal for a trifling debt; you can send him to Tyburn for a pitiful theft; and yet you cannot oblige him to make himself happy, by earning a comfortable livelihood in the way of honest industry—Very true—for, as a *free Briton*, the poorest man is still his own master.—You mean, he has a right to make himself extremely miserable.—But what right has he to recline himself an useless burden upon society? You'll say that society may leave him to starve; as it often does. But what's the good of that? The miserable wretch goes to the dogs; and society loses a hand that might have been of some use.—Pray why do you send your boys to school?—Why, surely to learn to read and write, and qualify themselves for business, in one shape or another.—Would not they rather pass their time in play, d'ye think?—I suppose they would; but their masters won't suffer them to be idle.—Well, those idle fools we talk of are always children; and ought to be submitted to any authority, that kindly obliges them to be busy for their own happiness.

In

In a neighbouring country, whose plan of police is, perhaps, the most perfect that ever human wisdom contrived, and the best executed; the poorest creature that can work is not suffered to be idle; the poorest creature that cannot work is not left to starve.

AN ANECDOTE.

I AM naturally fond of strangers; and, where all other circumstances are equal, should find myself disposed to pay them more or less attention in proportion to their distance from home. Where all things else are equal, in performing any little duties of benevolence within my power, I should prefer a German to a Hollander or a Frenchman; a Greek, a Russian, or a Turk, to a German; a Persian to a Turk; and so on to the utmost limits of the East.—Of all the people upon earth, the Asiatics appear to me the most amiable, noble, and generous: they seem the most possessed with that virtuous heroic enthusiasm, which exalts human nature to its highest degree of sublimity. One late well-attested instance of their generous humanity, may perhaps not be too tiresome to the im-

patient reader. The gentleman is but lately dead who favoured me with the following relation of a fact which deserves to be more generally known; and I give it in his own words:

In the year 1730, the Prince George, captain Cross, from Bengal and Surat to Canton, was drove into Juncum bay, on the coast of China, in a hard gale of wind; of such force as to make the supercargoes, Messrs. Stephenson and Harrison, with Mr. Alex. Wedderburn, purser, go ashore in the pinnace, in order to get a pilot, and such other help as their distress then required. The wind all that night blowing fiercer, next morning they were told the ship was lost, which they soon perceived to be too true. The mandarine of that district immediately ordered, that the fore-mentioned gentlemen, with Mr. Barlow, fourth mate, who then acted as coxswain of the pinnace, and the Lascars, should be provided with lodgings and all proper accommodations; and that every part of the wreck, and all the goods that could be saved, should be carefully gathered together, and put into a secure place for them; all which was faithfully performed. The generous mandarine's
humanity

humanity did not end here ; for he ordered a present of 350 tale * to Mr. Stephenfon, 300 to Mr. Harrison, 250 to Mr. Wedderburn, 200 to Mr. Barlow, and to each Lafcar as much as was reckoned equal to their full wages, had the voyage been performed in the usual time : and, at their departure, gave them an order, from the court of Pekin, for carriages, lodgings, and provisions, through every district in their way to Canton.

One would be glad to know, upon what Christian shore any ship-wreck'd crew could have met with such humane and generous treatment. What still the more heightens the merit of this noble behaviour, it is well known that the Chinese are not at all fond of trading with the Europeans ; and it is probable enough, that some other eastern nations may, in time, become as shy of them, from experience, as the sagacious Chinese have always been from theory and speculation.

As generous deeds do not appear every day, even in the most sensible, the most virtuous, and

* Three tale are equal in value to one pound sterling.

most magnificent of all possible ages ; there is room here to pay some proper respect to a late act of humanity in the present Emperor of Morocco ; which the following extract from his letter to the grand Master of Malta will explain :

“ In the name of God, the sole Almighty. To the Prince of Malta, Grand-Master of the Religion of St. John, and to all his Council, the Emperor of Morocco, Fez, Mequinez, &c. wishes health and prosperity. In compassion of several Tuscan slaves, who have long been in my possession, and have never yet been demanded of me, I send them all to be presented to you by my secretary Abladi Salciti : by this means, procuring myself at once the double satisfaction of making you a present, and of restoring liberty to those unfortunate people. If you had no captives of ours in your possession, I should desire nothing of you in return ; but as I know you have, I shall with great pleasure receive such as you may be pleased to send me.”

Along with this letter the Emperor sent thirty-seven Christian slaves ; and that the Grand-Master
of

of Malta returned exactly the same number of Mahometan captives, must have been owing to his having had no more.

OF FABLE AND HISTORY.

FOR want of intelligence, or candour, or perhaps of both, there is often too great a mixture of fable in history. On the other hand, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that there is more true history amongst the fables of the ancient poets than we generally imagine. And to compare the historian with the poet, the latter seems not only the most entertaining, but the most instructive, the most ingenuous, and most honest of the two; as he does not even expect your belief of every great and wonderful event or action he relates. The mixture of evident undisguised improbabilities, and what the critics I think call the *marvellous* in Homer, has, in too great a measure, weakened his credit as an historian. Though even in this capacity he has, perhaps, shewn himself much superior, in candour and impartiality, to many at least of our modern history-writers. In support of this observation, I can hardly think it necessary to

take notice, that he has in general represented more worthy, amiable, and heroic characters, amongst the Trojan heroes, than in those of his own country.

His commentators, I am told, have here and there been struck with some glimpses of true history in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. And indeed I should imagine, that his narration in each of those poems was built upon solid facts; enlivened with fable only to make it the more entertaining and wonderful; and, with the heightening of every ornament, to exalt an history into a poem. One particular circumstance, which I don't know that any of those commentators has observed in this light, seems strongly to favour such a conjecture. The hero of the *Odyssey*, after having, with great bravery and address, demolished the profligate suitors, puts the poor female attendants, who might have been passively concerned in the riots of his house, upon the shocking office of removing the bodies of their slaughtered lovers: and as soon as they have, by his orders, swabbed the bloody hall, he hangs them all up in a string against the wall of the court. Homer could never

have *made* the hero of his poem guilty of such an indecent unmanly piece of cruelty ; but found himself obliged, by his attachment to true history, to record it as a real atchievement of the * *hard-bearted Ulysses*.

THE STUDY OF HISTORY.

HISTORY is, in general, an uncomfortable fatiguing journey through a flat insipid country ; a tale too long for human patience. And after all, for want of intelligence and candour in the writers of history, you can seldom trust to its veracity. What different accounts are given of events that have happened even in our own times !—For my part, I find myself much disposed to be an infidel as to many disputed points of history. A battle is an *affair* of such confusion, that few, even of those who have been concerned in it, can explain its circumstances, or fairly recollect them. It is sometimes as much as you can do to discover which army gained the victory. But what is yet more surprizing, it has happened, that some very conspicuous characters in history have been so falsly represented, that the most worthless

* *Durus Ulysses*.

worthless and contemptible continue to be regarded with admiration ; while the best and the most amiable are considered with detestation and abhorrence.

A lively spirited relation of a formidable conspiracy, an important revolution, or any other interesting event, may afford a very agreeable entertainment. But human life is too short ; and it requires all the phlegmatic patience of a well-fed lawyer ; to attend to a long, drawling, insipid story, if it was ever so true.—Livy is far from being a heavy, loitering, dozing story-teller. His subject is enriched with a great variety of entertaining events. Notwithstanding his extravagant profusion of coxcomical ornaments, in very good speeches made by himself for people who never spoke them, he dispatches the affairs of a prodigious empire, throughout a whole century of perpetual action, in much less than half the number of pages that one insignificant reign of a king of France, or of England, has cost to some laborious compilers. And yet, for all the spirit, elegance, and dignity of his narration, perhaps there are not many now alive who have had perseverance enough

to

to attend the great Latin historian to the end of his tale ; even shortened as it is by the injuries of chance and time.

So much for history as an amusement. As to its use towards qualifying a statesman for the management of public affairs, I take it to be very inconsiderable. A general acquaintance with the history of his own country is perhaps enough for a *prime minister* ; and some, I am told, have made a tolerable shift to stumble on for many years without even that. With a proper share of sagacity, resolution, activity, and address, an honest statesman might, in the most troublesome times, do great things for his country ; though he had never turned over one leaf of either Livy, Tacitus, or Sallust. Mean time, allusions and references to ancient history have long been successfully employed to give some credit, with an air of consequence and dignity, to the delusive lucubrations of your state empirics, and their venal journey-men. And this seems to be the only advantage which our statesmen have ever yet drawn from the study of history.

OF FAME.

THERE is as much variety of taste in this capital article of happiness, as in any thing else. For there are multitudes who would be ashamed of a virtuous renown, and proud of what they would think a glorious villainy. An inhuman, dissolute, abandoned villain, will naturally admire the character of a Tiberius, a Nero, or a Domitian; and perhaps, without much affectation, despise that of a Titus or a Trajan.

If you are not perfectly indifferent as to the good opinion of the mob, you are one of them yourself. *Their* opinion, as far as all politic views are out of the question, is much below the consideration of every man who has any tolerable share of understanding. But he who is above the opinion of the better and more sensible part of mankind; he who does not regard it with the utmost reverence; is most certainly capable of every thing that is base and villainous.

OF REVENGE.

THE gratification of this passion in the hands of a sensible man, a person of moderation and humanity, will hardly ever, in cold blood, exceed the bounds of an exact retaliation. So far I should reckon it just, and a proper supplement to the laws; which afford no redress in many cases of the most insupportable injustice. I could perhaps forgive an act of villainy which is not cognizable by the laws—but I don't chuse it—it is against my principles—it is weak, impolitic, and absurd.—In such cases you have nothing but the fearful apprehensions of your own resentment, to keep rascals in awe.

Every act of just vengeance is *a terror to evil doers*; and contributes somewhat to the safety of honest and inoffensive people:—perhaps it might even to the stability of government; if it should ever become so despicably weak, so tottering and paralytic, as tamely to bear the insults of an abandoned, stupid, cowardly populace.

O F B L A S P H E M Y.

THERE is a set of vain crazy mortals, I was going to say half-witted fellows, but that would be too great a compliment: fools, that attempt to shine by talking blasphemy.—Good God!—it would be a small triumph to outshine all those geniuses in that stile. —I fear the thunder at least as little as any of those indecent reprobates; but I cannot be so stupidly ungrateful, as to insult the adorable author of my being and all the pleasures of my life. There surely needs very little wit to ridicule the ideal God of the vulgar; who conceive the stupenduous Creator of the universe; the Almighty Spirit, who has produced every thing that is good, great, and beautiful; to be a testy, ill-natured old man, with a long beard.

After all, to give the devil his due; a knave, who is always at bottom a fool, as indeed most of us are, is of all animals the least unpardonable for complaining of his Maker.

THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

WHAT we call Evil, as well as every thing that is good, most certainly sprung from the great fountain of all existence. Heaven, which gave us corn, wine, and oil, sent us also war, famine, and pestilence. The most pernicious things have their uses ; and the rankest poisons, skilfully managed, prove the most powerful medicines.

In moral life, a perfect character would be a monster ; at least I should hardly chuse the society of a man who was above all human weaknesses. The amiable medium of virtue, to the best of my apprehension, lies between a rigid, severe, minute, exact, over-scrupulous sanctity, and a dissolute profligacy. It avoids the one, as disagreeable, uncomfortable, and forbidding ; the other, as indecent, shocking, and contemptible.

I humbly conceive, that there cannot be much pleasure in a state that is not, in one shape or another, obnoxious to pain ; and that none, but

the Almighty himself, can enjoy an uninterrupted and immutable happiness. The heathen elysium has nothing to recommend it but ease and tranquility ; green fields and serene weather ; which one would wish sometimes to change for a storm. The happy heroes there are a parcel of mere loungers ; insipid murderers of time ; or rather, useless trifling wasters of eternity. It is difficult to imagine any thing so tiresome as their condition.—The Mahometan paradise is flattering indeed as to one article of pleasure ;—but that is hardly enough—For even love itself may, once in forty or fifty years, sigh for a truce of a few hours ; at least for a little variety. Without variety, life is insipid in this world : and the happiest situation in the next may possibly enough be somewhat exposed to disagreeable rubs ; that it may not sink into a state of insipid dissipation, or supine inactivity.—You all know what horrible riots and combustions broke out in heaven at the time that old Satan, or his Sulphureous Highness (according to the title with which he has lately been dignified by a pulpit orator) lost his wits, and rebelled against almighty power.—What squabbles may have happened there since, heaven only knows ; as all historical intelligence from
thence

thence has been shut up ever since the cessation of inspired writing.

In short, the Christian *Hades*, with a tolerable mixture of variety, would be a more eligible situation, than either the heathen Elysium, or the Paradise of Mahomet. To fry for ever under the dog-days must be horrible. But with a reasonable variety of cool air, fresh spring-water, iced cream, plenty of good Rhenish, Old-hock, Moselle, Cyder, Burgundy, and some other comfortable things, one might make a tolerable shift *there* : or even in *Jamaica* itself.

But to be very serious ; without a certain mixture of what we call Evil, the beautiful and entertaining variety which the almighty Creator exhibits both in the natural and moral world, must have been imperfect. If this mixture was not necessary to the beauty and perfection of nature, it must have been unavoidable. For it is beyond the power of God himself to perform things naturally impossible. There are numberless things, both in the natural and moral world, which no more depend upon the will of God, than

that two and two make four ; or that a sphere is more capacious than any other figure under the same extent of surface. A proportionable sensibility of pain, must, I suppose, unavoidably attend that of pleasure. God Almighty has given you sense enough to take care of yourself ; but, to be perfectly secured from burning or drowning, you must have a world without either fire or water.

To conclude ; if *the ways of God to man* needed any *vindication*, why may we not presume that, supposing a mixture of *real* evil to be unavoidable, the Almighty should chuse to admit some evil rather than that there should be no good ; to expose his creatures to some chance of pain and misery, rather than that there should be no creation ; rather than that infinite space, the scene of his stupenduously magnificent and most beautiful works, should for ever remain waste, empty, and desolate ?

OF FASCINATION.

THE language of the eyes is so expressive, as to be understood at the first glance. But the art by which the rattle-snake, and others of the serpent family, can ogle a hare into their formidable jaws, or,

Drink from the midst of heaven the ill-pois'd lark,
might deserve some consideration. Some honest sensible naturalists appear confident of the fact. For my part, though I have never yet seen it, strange as it is, I have no right to say it is impossible.—I can conceive a man in such a state of mind and circumstances as to find himself tempted to do the very thing that would give him the utmost horror. That most unhappy madman *Caligula*, they say, would often tell *Cæsonia*, of whom he was so passionately fond, *How easily could I strike off this charming head of thine!*

I recollect upon this occasion, some lines in a poet, who of all mankind had the most intimate acquaintance with human nature—

*What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff,
That beetles o'er its base into the sea—*

*The very place puts Toys of desperation
Without more motive into every brain,
That looks so many fathoms to the sea,
And hears it roar beneath.*

If I remember right, *Montagne*, who does not seem to have been of a melancholy complexion, somewhere says, that when he found himself upon the top of some hideous precipice in his mountainous neighbourhood, he had often felt an impulse to leap down. The shocking fate of a young lady; who, according to report, within these two or three years, while she was observing the dreadful figure of a large shark, slipped out of the cabin-window into the sea, might possibly enough have been owing to some desperate impulse of this kind.

As one would do any thing reasonable to rescue the memory of a great man from unjust reproach; I think it impossible that *Empedocles* could have been

been so very weak, as by a fly slip out of this world, either to hope or wish to pass for one of *the immortal gods*. — The hollow surface might have failed him; he might have slipped in by the mere chance of an unlucky step; he might have been suffocated by the sulphureous steam; or, on the brink of the burning gulph, he might naturally enough have grown giddy; or have been seized with such *Toys of desperation* as *Shakespear* talks of. — But neither envy, malice, nor jealousy, have the least acquaintance with generosity or candour.

THE INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE UPON GENIUS.

THERE are people so bigoted to some particular theory, to false opinions and prejudices, as indolently to surrender even their own sensations to them. There are in this island some renegadoes absurd enough to tell you, that Britain lies at too great a distance from the sun to produce any genius. It is really paying too much attention to such tasteless, ignorant, superficial connoisseurs, to ask them, what country in Europe, what cli-

mate the nearest to the sun, has displayed a richer bloom of genius, in almost any department, than has spontaneously sprung up in this foggy island; without even any kind fostering influences from the superiour powers—excepting those alone of heaven and nature.—In what kind of genius is this island inferior to any nation under the sun?—How many geniuses has the happy climate of Italy produced, in any shape, since the days of Augustus?—The genial fruitful latitude of Greece has now lain quite fallow for near two thousand years. Spain should be ashamed to boast of, or even to own her noble, generous, her delightful Cervantes, whom she pitifully suffered to starve. — But what great geniuses has ever the warm climate of Africa produced? from the coast of Barbary to that of Guinea? from the mouth of the Nile to the Cape of Good-Hope?

There are perhaps only two arts in which this island yields to any climate, however near the sun. It appears that the vainest Romans did not pretend to vie with the Greeks in statuary. Yet, what artists in that way has modern Italy produced superior, or even equal to those of old Rome?—Very

few, I believe, and if it was not for Michael Angelo, perhaps one might venture to say none; tho' Italy, I suppose, lies as near the sun as it did eighteen hundred years ago.—If the English have not hitherto excelled in painting, it may be imputed to circumstances that need no explanation. But, notwithstanding all the obstacles to true genius in this island: it has, within these few years, lost a painter of singular excellence; as natural and expressive, I'll venture to say it, in the comic and familiarly moral style, as Raphael was in the serious and sublime. And you may wait many centuries before such another flower blows in *any* climate. I reckon that still, *even in this age*, our island may boast of several geniuses, who, for instance, in portrait perhaps excel every painter in Europe, since the days of Vandyke: to whom unprejudiced posterity may find them at least equal; some perhaps superior. We have some too who are admirable in landscape.—But these geniuses are still alive; and some of them may be seen at a coffee-house, where they look much like other people. A hundred years hence, a connoisseur may probably enough wish to make a journey of a thousand miles to see them; and would be gloriously happy
on

on his return home, to tell his neighbours he had shook them by the hand. As to history itself, besides some promising specimens of it at home, perhaps even this barren age has produced a genius, not indeed of British growth; unpatronized, and at present almost unknown; who may live to astonish, to terrify, and delight all Europe. But true genius is such an uncommon production of nature, and is so much superior to all quackish arts of recommending itself, that when it does appear, it is no wonder that a generation of people without taste do not know it.

Genius may shoot up in a land quite inhospitable to it; it may perhaps even blossom in the most ungenial season. But the rose-bush that displays its blushing honours in the face of the surly uncomfortable east wind, must have sprung from a root of no small vigour. In a certain island, the fostering indulgences and kind attention which the narcissus, the gilly-flower, the tuberose, the Cape jessamin, and all the delicate flowers that adorn the garden, deserve and require; are most absurdly and perniciously bestowed upon ragwort, jack of the hedge, priest's what d'ye call it, bishops weed, bearsfoot, nightshade, and henbane.

THE TASTE OF THE PRESENT
AGE.

AMONGST many other distinguishing marks of a stupid age, a bad crop of men, I have been told that the taste in writing was never so false as at present. If it is really so, it may perhaps be owing to a prodigious swarm of insipid trashy writers: amongst whom there are some who pretend to dictate to the public as critics, though they hardly ever fail to be mistaken. But their dogmatic impudence, and something like a scientific air of talking the most palpable nonsense, imposes upon great numbers of people, who really possess a considerable share of natural Taste; of which at the same time they are so little conscious as to suffer themselves passively to be misled by those blundering guides.

A Taste worth cultivating is to be improved and preserved by reading *only* the best writers. But whoever, after perusing a satire of Horace, even in the dullest English translation, can relish the stupid abuse of a blackguard rhymster, may

as

as well indulge the natural depravity of his Taste, and riot for life upon distiller's grains.

But the Taste in writing is not, cannot be worse, than it is in music, as well as in all theatrical entertainments. In architecture indeed there are some elegant and magnificent works arising, at a very proper time to restore the nation to some credit with its neighbours in this article; after its having been exposed to such repeated disgraces by a triumvirate of awkward clumsy piles, that are not ashamed to shew their stupid heads in the neighbourhood of Whitehall: and one more, that ought to be demolished; if it was for no other reason but to restore the view of an elegant church, which has now for many years been buried alive behind the Mansion-house.

It is indeed some comfort, that while Taste and Genius happen to be very false and impotent in most of the fine arts, they are not so in all. The arts of Gardening particularly, and the elegant plan of a farm, have of late years displayed themselves in a few spots to greater advantage in England, than perhaps ever before in any part of Europe.

Europe. This is indeed very far from being universal ; and some gardens, admired and celebrated still, are so smoothly regular, so over-planted, and so crowded with affected, impertinent, ridiculous ornaments of temples, ruins, pyramids, obelisks, statues, and a thousand other contemptible whims, that a continuation of the same ground in its rude natural state, is infinitely more delightful. You must often have seen fine situations ruined with costly pretences to *improvement*. The most noble and romantic situation of any gardens I have seen, is near Chepstow ; and the gentleman who possesses that delightful spot, has shewn great judgment and a true taste, in meddling so little with Nature where she wanted so little help.

This is one happy instance of an admirable situation, where Nature is modestly and judiciously improved, not hurt, by art. An opposite instance of what art, skill, and taste may produce, without any particular advantages of ground or situation, is most agreeably displayed in the royal gardens at Kew. There you find an extent of flat ground, so easily, agreeably, and unaffectedly broken, that you would think it impossible to
alter

alter it but to the worse. To pass without any notice the agreeable and the elegant pieces of architecture, which without crowding adorn those delightful gardens; perhaps there is not a physick garden in Europe where any botanist can be more agreeably entertained, as to the variety of curious plants. But there is something new as far as I know, and particularly ingenious here in the disposition and management of them. Those that naturally delight in the rocks, and the dry hungry soil, are here planted upon ridges of artificial rock-work; where they shew all the luxuriance of vegetation that they could amongst the Alps, the Pyrenees or the Andes. While a very different tribe, the Aquatics, display themselves in a large cistern, where they are constantly supplied with their best and most natural nourishment the rain water, conveyed to them from the eves of the richest greenhouse I have ever seen.

OF THE DRAMATIC UNITIES.

I suppose few architects will deny that walls, doors, windows, a roof and chimneys, are necessary to a convenient habitation. In my opinion, a strict adherence to the three Unities, as they are established upon the firm foundation of good sense, is not less necessary in the structure of both Tragedy and Comedy; which otherways, especially as represented upon the stage, are irregular, slovenly, blundering, absurd and improbable. And that even *we* are not shocked at the daily trespasses against them is owing to custom and Shakespear. But it requires so much art to fill up five acts of a play with the business of one single interesting event; without one scene that is not necessary to forward it; without the least change of place; and without exceeding the time of representation; or even the compass of twelve hours, which is permitted by the courtesy of the critics; that it is no wonder most of our dramatic writers affect to despise rules so difficult to practise.

The three great French dramatic poets, Corneille, Racine and Moliere, have in this article been much

more successful than the English: amongst whom, if you except Ben Johnson in three or four of his capital pieces, I am afraid we shall find very few who have built upon a regular plan; which is exactly the same thing to a play as composition is to a history in painting. Shakespear indeed without one perfect plan has perhaps excelled all other dramatic poets as to detached scenes. But he was a wonder!—His deep knowledge of human nature, his prodigious variety of fancy and invention, and of characters drawn with the strongest truest and most exquisite strokes, oblige you to forget his most violent irregularities. However, to compare two stupenduous geniuses in different departments; Shakespear for this mere disregard of plan appears less perfect than Raphael: who has heightened the truest and most masterly expressions in his various characters by the advantages of a composition the most august and superb imaginable where it was proper; and always the most elegant easy happy and natural.

The Samson Agonistes of Milton was it seems recommended by a celebrated prelate to Mr. Pope, as a performance that he might easily mould into a perfect

perfect model of Tragedy.—A most desperate task!—For, besides that the dialogue in Samson is for the greatest part dry, metaphysical, pedantic, and reads like a starched, laborious, slavish translation from Euripides; I cannot help thinking, with all due deference to Milton and the B. of Rochester, that the Samson Agonistes is no more to a Tragedy, than a long Farce of one act would be to a Comedy. For the stage, if I remember right, is never once cleared of the persons introduced from the first scene to the last.

OF TRAGEDY AND COMEDY.

NOtwithstanding the opinion of some old critick, that a perfect tragedy is the noblest production of which the human wit is capable; it has long been a subject of learned dispute, whether a perfect comedy was not the more difficult undertaking of the two. The great majority of judges, who are not always in the right, have I believe still given the preference to comedy in this respect. They tell you that as comedy is a representation of common life, and incidents that are exposed to

daily observation, it must be a work of more difficult execution: Since most people truly are qualified to judge of what is natural in common life. But are we not equally judges of natural expressions in cases of the most tragical distress? Even in the most exalted personages? What should hinder?—Do the passions operate differently in similar situations according to the different ranks of mankind? A King or an Emperor may upon occasion be as much enraged as a chafed dray-man; only he'll express his anger with more dignity and in more decent language.

It is, no doubt, equally the business of tragedy and comedy to represent life and characters naturally. And we have as good a right to expect true pictures of nature from the one as from the other.

Mean time, I imagine the working up of a good tragedy to be by many degrees the more difficult and arduous task of the two. Except you think the sublime productions of Raphael required less genius than those of Hogarth; whom I would never be understood to mention but in terms of
great

great esteem and admiration.—How many tolerable comedies have we seen for one tragedy, in which the passions are naturally represented, and expressed with propriety and spirit? Mouthings, big words, turgid unnatural language, and affected sentiments, are nothing to the purpose; instead of moving the passions, they only create contempt and disgust in people of proper feelings. I would ask how many very good comic romances have appeared in the European languages for one tolerable epic poem? Let me ask, again, how many excellent comedians of both sexes have appeared upon the English stage within the memory of many now living, for one that has excelled in tragedy?

As to what Moliere says upon this subject, I think it is in his *Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes*, it amounts to no more than this; that it is much easier to write a bad tragedy than a good comedy: which I suppose will be readily granted.

After all, I believe it must be allowed, that a loud ranting declamatory tragedy, in which nature is perpetually kept at the truncheon's end; with the assistance especially of magnificent dresses,

changes of amusing scenes, altars, sacrifices, processions, public audiences of ambassadors, and such other mechanical ornaments as are easily introduced ; is much more likely to impose upon the eyes and ears of the multitude than a cold insipid comedy.

OF THE CARELESS HUSBAND.

AS the Careless Husband, tho' it has not appeared upon the stage perhaps once these thirty years, still possesses the first rank amongst our modern comedies, in the opinion of many thousands who have never either read it or seen it represented ; I had some time since the curiosity to give it a second perusal ; because when I read it many years ago, I could not conceive how it came to be so particularly admired. And now, it does not by any means strike me as the best even of the few modern English comedies with which I have any acquaintance. Sir Charles, the hero, the fine gentleman of the play, behaves rather brutally, and even with a needless, absurd, cruelty to poor Edging ; impertinent as she is. What is still worse ; in the tender scene between him and Lady Easy,

Easy, where all art and insincerity ought to be generously thrown aside, he is disingenuous enough to make a merit of parting with a mistress he was tired of, and from whom he had just disengaged himself. That return of affection to a wife who was once become indifferent to him seems hardly natural, to a man at least of Sir Charles's character; and L. Easy has no great reason to depend much upon it. As to L. Betty Modish; such a flippant coquette does not promise at all to be a happy match, for such an honest sincere enamorado as L. Lovemore; but I hope he will never trust her too long out of his sight; not even with his friend and officious match-maker Sir Charles. In short Sir Charles is no more than a mere man of pleasure, of great indifference and *non chalance*; much such another as Colley was himself. For I had the honour to be a little acquainted with Mr. Cibber; who besides his abilities as a writer, and the singular variety of his powers as an actor, was to the last one of the most agreeable chearful and best humoured men you would ever wish to converse with.—But to return to Sir Charles; the tenderness he expresses in the forementioned scene, shews a change of character too sudden and too

violent to be natural; and is contrived only to serve a purpose in the play.

The sudden change of character in Lady Townly in the Provoked Husband, is not less unnatural than that of Sir Charles Easy.—I have good authority for it, that Sir John Vanbrugh, who left the play unfinished, never intended any such reformation. And of all the dramatic poets who have appeared in this century, Vanbrugh seems to have had the truest knowledge of human nature: If you except any, it can be none but Fielding; whose admirable Parody upon the modern English Tragedies might alone be sufficient to procure him a high rank amongst the Comic Poets.

OF GLOOMY WRITING.

I have read so little for many years upon any subject that did not immediately concern the political state of the nation; of which every journeyman weaver, taylor, barber, every porter, chairman, coachman, drayman, carman, shoe cleaner and chimney sweeper in London ought to make himself master, for the good and safety of the whole; that I am grown quite out of acquaintance with the delights of those writers they call the

classics. But, to recollect some juvenile impressions, I used to think that in the works of the best poets, there is generally an air of chearfulness and gaiety ; wherever their subject in any degree admits of it. The inferiour geniuses are either insipidly serene ; or when they affect the serious and sublime, it is heavy, gloomy and melancholy. Virgil is like the sun, bright and chearful. Lucan is a subterraneous vault on fire ; and when he wants to breathe the open air would be the Stygian lake in a storm, if he could. There is such a gloomy solemnity in most of the writers of that age, with whom I have ever had any acquaintance ; that you would think the Sun had always waded through a sky of blood in the days of those inhuman Emperors.

OF A LINE IN LUCRETIVS.

IT cannot be less than thirty years since I have looked into Lucretius ; and of the few lines in his elaborate poem that stick to my memory there is one,

Nempe aliæ quoque sunt ; nempe hac sine viximus ante—

that if it was not for other lines and one particular anecdote, would almost tempt one to imagine

gine he had never been in love. What consolation I beseech you, can it give a lover dying of his wounds to tell him, *There are others as fair as she; and you lived happily enough before you ever saw her.*—Very true. But this is mere sophistry, and nothing at all to the purpose. For, says the intoxicated lover, I cannot live without this particular sweet creature: of all the sex, she is the only one that can make me completely happy.—How soon, after possessing this bewitching angel, he may wish to get rid of her, is a question not much to the purpose at present.

OF THE GOOSE-PHŒNIX.

THIS is perhaps one of the highest curiosities that has ever appeared even at court, either in bag-wig or tye. But as he is rather out of his place here, and deserves a particular description, I intend to exhibit him in my Natural History, which I am preparing for the press, under the article of *Strange Birds*.

OF SINGING.

TALKING of birds, pray how d'ye relish the Italian Singers? — Why really not so much as many *pretend* to do ; a great many, a prodigious multitude of all ranks ; who resign their own sensations to other people, and dare neither *bear* nor *see* for themselves ; who dare not even *eat* or *drink* for themselves. For my part, I am sincere enough to own, that the Singers at the opera seldom give me much pleasure ; and least of all while they are warbling out a note, to the length of a league. Besides that I am in pain for their throats, I feel a contemptuous disgust, and a strange disagreeable sensation of shame both for them and the audience, who never fail to acknowledge those flourishes with the loudest applause. But in almost all Singing, I cannot help lamenting what I think a most material imperfection. A sweet tune, well sung, gives a ravishing grace even to lines, that when you come to read them you are surprized to find how flat and insipid they are ; and often how nonsensical. What I complain of is, that few Singers pronounce the words
distinctly

distinctly enough to be understood. They might almost as well sing *Fal al de ral* for ever and ever.

I have reason to suspect, that the most exquisite powers in this way, for want of assurance in those who possess them, are sometimes lost; and remain quite unknown, except to a few of their most familiar friends. This diffidence is only to be regretted. But I can find no excuse for those volunteers in music, who have got that silly, impertinent, disgusting, provoking habit, of humming a tune to themselves in company, my dear honey: and at piquet, cribbage, or quadrille; even at *whist* itself, sing over their cards.

OF A VULGAR ERROR.

I Have always considered it as a self-evident absurdity, to imagine that the Scottish tunes were composed by an Italian fidler. But I own that my opinion upon this subject has begun to totter, ever since it was discovered that the real author of OSSIAN's Poems was one *Korah Sukkub-bit*, Esq. an idle drunken fellow, who some ten or twelve thousand years ago, lived by making and mending

mending of Jews-harps at the borough of *Gomorrhah*, in the county of *Palestine*.—Good God how provoking this is!—Bless your ears! the greatest part of the Scotch, Welsh, and Irish tunes were composed long before the Italians, or even the Flemish knew any thing of music. Excepting *Corelli*, *Pergolesi*, and perhaps one or two more distinguishable masters of that charming art; the Italian composers have seldom aspired at any thing beyond mere mechanical harmony; in which any one who has a tolerable ear may succeed. But to express the passions is a different affair: it is one of the greatest powers that belongs to true genius; which happens to be a very uncommon gift of Nature.

Handel was in general a noisy overbearing bully in Music; sometimes indeed, but not often, pathetic.—Yet still charming, as far as mere harmony goes. But it was not in him, still less in *David Rizzio*, a mere old fidler, who only executed what other people had composed, to have even imitated, with any success, the Scottish tunes; whether melancholy or gay; whether amorous, martial, or pastoral: in a style highly original, and most feelingly expressive of all the passions, from the sweetest

to the most terrible.—Who was it that threw out those dreadful wild expressions of distraction and melancholy in *Lady Culross's Dream*? an old composition, now I am afraid lost, perhaps because it was almost *too terrible for the ear*.—I'll venture to swear that *David Rizzio* was as innocent as any lamb of all such frantic horrors.

OF SOME OTHER VULGAR ERRORS.

SOME people seem to wonder that *Stupidity and Malice* should meet.—So far from being opposite qualities, they are, for the most part, husband and wife. And why should you attempt to separate whom the Devil has joined?

Even of fools afraid.—Is this a just reproach? Pray what animal is so troublesome or dangerous as a fool, whether he is your enemy or your friend?

Why are *Magnanimity and Meekness, Wit and Wisdom*, supposed such extraordinary combinations?—Good sense is surely the solid foundation of true wit: and the truest magnanimity is above all the little turbulence of passion; which is sometimes affected to disguise fear.

A bad

A bad heart is by some people supposed almost inseparable from an able head.—It is quite the contrary: for where the heart is false, the head is never sound. A fool may be honest; but the most plausible knave never yet possessed a sound understanding. In a word, the less moral a man is, the nearer he approaches to an ass.

Mere Vivacity is every day mistaken for Wit: and most people, when you talk of a Wit, suppose it a vain, pert, brisk, impudent, ill-natured creature, that says such things as would be pardonable only to an impertinent child. True Wit is seldom or never petulant: it would rather suppress even a good joke, than give the least uneasiness to any person that is not a fair object of satire.

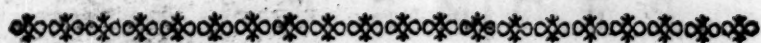
A serious disposition and a relish of pleasure, are reckoned opposite to one another by the generality of fools; who have not reflection enough to observe that the extasies of pleasure are of all things the most serious. This all sensible women know. The fools of the sex, who are sometimes as voluptuous as their betters, seem often to be out of this secret. But pray who is so grave, or

shews such a solemn front as the husband of the herd?—The wether is an insipid whiffling fellow to the ram; whose dignified gravity abates, and becomes less distinguishable, as soon as the genial season is over.—And I have been told by some ladies of very good sense and considerable experience, that the grave rake is the man.

O F C I V I L I T Y.

A Few days ago, upon accidentally opening an old book, I found the following reflection; “Incivility is not a vice of the soul, but the effect of many vices; of ridiculous vanity, of ignorance, idleness, stupidity, giddiness, contempt of others, of ill nature, and jealousy.”

This I take to be a very just and true account of the various ingredients which compose Incivility.—As to Civility, if I am not mistaken, it is an universal duty; all mankind have a natural claim to it from one another, and without it there can be no intercourse in society, but what is disagreeable, shocking, brutish, and dangerous. Every good-natured generous-spirited person, will practise it for pleasure; every sensible man, whether good-natured or not, for his own convenience and quiet.

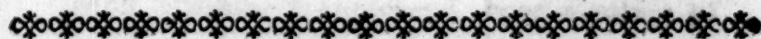


S E N T E N C E S,

M A X I M S,

A N D

R E V E R I E S.



VOL. II.

S

SECRET

S. M. F. X. A. N.

REVERIE

S E N T E N C E S,

M A X I M S,

A N D

R E V E R I E S.

THERE are many degrees of madness on this side of Bedlam—Those too that stop short of it, are by far the most dangerous kinds of insanity; and it would be much happier for the public, as well as for many individuals, if some people were a little madder than they appear to be.

Most oddities, I apprehend, have a twang of madness in them; though they are often the excesses of some good quality.

In education, it is perhaps proper and necessary for young people to be pushed on to many hard and disagreeable things; especially as they are so

often unavoidable in life.—Had it depended upon one's own choice, who would have dared to have been born?—Good God! to be received into the world by a frightful old woman of either sex—*Hercules* himself would have avoided it if he could.

What does a conscience void of all *great offences* signify to one who torments himself for every little misbehaviour, every inattention, of which, absence, hurry, or a hypochondriacal fit of diffidence, may have made him guilty? For one trifling neglect in point of good manners, may give more pain of mind to a man of much sensibility, than all the horrible crimes of a most flagitious life ever gave to such a profligate wretch as *Cæsar Borgia*; whom I take to be the greatest of all modern villains. For the present are still out of the question.

Catiline was but half a villain—He strikes you only with horror. The compleat villain affects you at the same time with horror and contempt.

I for-

I forget whether it is a reflection of *Machiavel's* or some other political writer, that the state or empire must go to ruin in a great hurry, whose affairs are conducted by such people as in low life must have belonged to a gang of thieves, or made perhaps some figure amongst the banditti.

The characters that historians give of some eminent persons, are not always quite just. *Caligula*, for instance, has been represented by most of them as a monster of cruelty. For my part, I cannot help considering him as *the best of emperors*; and have always admired the humanity of his wish, that the mob of Rome had but one neck, and himself a good sharp ax to let drop upon it. A tyrant, whose taste in the *virtu* led him to bloody exercises, would naturally have wished that every Roman had at least three heads, that he might never be distressed for want of *game*. Yet, after all, I'm afraid that this good-natured sentiment of Caligula might, by some severe moralist, be imputed rather to indolence than to real humanity: for sometimes, to be sure, *Decipimur*

specie recti, — We are imposed upon by false appearances of virtue.

How !—Caliban turned critic !—Which Caliban ? for they're a numerous family, blest their sweet bodies ! and several of them critics.—Lord ! I mean the great lubberly sea-calf that was found snoring with open mouth upon the beach after the last spring-tide.—O he !—Yes,—A critic to be sure ; and stupid as you may think him, he may be of excellent use to a reader who has his cue : for he must be read backwards ; as the very reverse of his opinions will generally, I don't say always, be just and true. Most of our present critics naturally enough put me in mind of an arch thing that a certain witty gentleman said upon a similar occasion—*Optat Ephemera bos piger—The heavy ox would gladly be as fine as a horse.* Just as if an awkward, clumsy, dancing bear should be smit with the ambition of shining at the *Ridotto*.

As there are not perhaps, even in this sensible age above three or four infallible men in all England ; and one of them is sometimes inaccessible
from

from cruel fits of the asthma, and some nasty scorbutic complaints: I should think it best, in all doubtful critical decisive situations, to consult the greatest fool of your acquaintance. And if he advises a voyage to the East Indies, be sure to throw yourself into the first ship that is to sail for Jamaica. I am told that some of the ancients used to pay a religious veneration to a certain kind of people. And they must have had some reason for it.

It would be a capital joke to observe how clever and sensible a fool thinks himself; if it was not so very common a sight as it happens to be.

When there is the least time for deliberation, one should never do any thing in a hurry.—A friend of mine, who does not want for a reasonable share of pride, told me some days ago, that he should never forgive himself for having once, in a fit of absence and fluttering spirits, too readily executed what was proposed, by a very impertinent message which came to him from a pair of people, whom he hardly knew further than by name. Tho' at the same time it happened to be the very thing he had intended to do; for the sake of avoid-

ing such unreasonable and illiberal reflections as in some situations are naturally to be apprehended from malice or ignorance.

What d'ye mean by saying always *same day*, *said day*? can't you say *the same day*, you barbarian?—I have often heard you say—*lay*, where you ought to say *lie*.—Bless your body! Why do you *put always*, instead of *always put*, the adverb after the verb?—It has a vile effect: but you may sufficiently flatten your language without it; for it is languid and drawling enough at the best. You have got a despicable habit too, of saying *neither this or that*. If you understood even the mechanical rules of grammar, you would say *neither this nor that*, *nor* any thing.—I suppose you'll set about coining new words by and by. But depend upon it you'll never make one that will find itself *admissible* to the English language. It will *rescue* every word that is issued from your mint.—For my part, as it seems hitherto undetermined whether one should say *never* or *ever*; as in the following instance: *If a patriot was ever so active in attempting the ruin of his country*—till this subtle point

is

is decided, I shall sometimes say *ever*, sometimes *never*, just as it happens to suit my ear.

Pray, why don't you roll about in your carriage again, as you did when you were many years younger, and could not so easily afford it as now?—Why, sir, I am, thank Heaven, very able to walk: and without a great deal of exercise, I can neither eat nor sleep. Besides, sir, I always hated that jolting over the stones; and every good day, when I envied all foot passengers, I used to grudge myself the expence that either my own or other people's vanity cost me in that article. Now, whenever it rains or the streets are dirty, I can command a coach or a chair for a mere trifle.—But at this rate who will employ you?—None I hope but a few friends, to whom I most devoutly wish perpetual health; and as soon as this life is grown insipid to them, an easy and quick passage to a better; that my tranquillity may never be interrupted by their distress—Nay, you are welcome to laugh at me as long as you please; but my present scheme is to pass the time as agreeably as I can, and to have no more to do with business than is consistent with that scheme.—Well thou'rt a

strange fellow—a most unhappy mixture of ambition, indolence, love of pleasure, and a kind of delicacy very ill calculated to succeed in the scramble of life.—No, I beg your pardon, I am pretty well cured of my ambition.—For when I see what sort of geniuses very commonly make no small noise and bustle—But I would not be thought to envy where I have always despised.—*Non equidem invidéo, miror magis*—Tho' after all, there is but little room here for wonder, considering what kind of people constitute the great majority of all ranks in a certain overgrown town : and how even many of them that in other common affairs are not fools, to avoid the trouble of judging for themselves, often follow the rest in matters of the utmost consequence to their own precious lives.

Impudence, the thriving son of Stupidity, will make very small talents do great things.

That glaring dim-eyed pug is in such vogue, that tho' I know him to be in point of understanding amongst the most vulgar of the human race ; I am almost tempted to impose so strangely upon

my

my own judgment as to imagine there is something in him.

Pray who is that facetious gentleman?—He can't so much as ask how you do without laughing—He must lead a merry life—d'ye know him?—Upon my word not I. But I have observed that the dullest people generally laugh the most: from a consciousness perhaps, of their own insipidity, which they endeavour to disguise by the exercise of laughing.

For heaven's sake my dear friend, don't make a trade of laughing. If your aim is to be witty every hour of the day, you'll turn out a teizing disagreeable companion. When the weather or the company is against you keep yourself quiet; and never be ashamed to be dull amongst block-heads, let them be never so noisy. In conversation, wit should be accidental; otherways you must naturally despise its vanity and affectation—Meantime after mangling a joke that has thrown ten or a dozen sensible people into a hearty fit of laughing, don't be so cruel as to doubt whether it really was a joke or not; and to conclude, because
you

you cannot recollect all the circumstances, that the mirth it produced must have been owing to the manner of saying it. Besides, that sometimes a very good joke can hardly be repeated without losing its spirit; the best jokes, tho' they are felt immediately by people of proper sensations; are not always easily explained as to the *mode of Titillation*, with which they affect the *risible Faculty*; except perhaps by some phlegmatic metaphysical connoisseur in wit, who never once felt a good joke in his life.—Pray, what is it that pleases you in the smell of a Jonquil, a Rose, or a Gillyflower?—If you're resolved not to enjoy their fragrance till that is explained, you may as well shut up your nose for ever.

I have seen a most unnatural extravagant piece of absurdity received with great applause; while flashes of true wit have past without the least notice.

It is so easy to tickle fools with blasphemy, petulance, and any kind of indecent ribaldry, that these are the common resources of every crazy impudent fellow who would pass for a wit.

You

You never meet with any impertinence in the company of well-bred people — while you are decent and inoffensive yourself, you have no disagreeable behaviour in any shape to apprehend from them. And the more wit any man has, you will, almost without exception, find him the less apt to be petulant.

There is nothing so provoking as the impertinent compliments of a fool who wishes you well; who flacks you while he thinks he is doing you a pleasure,

It happened, as I have been informed, that several years ago a gentleman, whose name I cannot at present recollect, observed to Mr. T. that Mr. B. though he past for a man of genius, was rather a hum-drum companion, and seldom said any thing very remarkable. To which Mr. M. told me that Mr. T. replied, — Aye, but he never fails to improve what *you* say—This seemed to be performing the part of rather a cold back friend. For I have known Mr. T. shine whole evenings together upon hints in a manner whispered to him by the forefaid Mr. B—; while he
happened

happened to be either too modest or too indolent to pursue them himself.—But a man of ticklish sensations may find it impossible to be happy and in good humour in the company of certain particular people, whom at the same time he may perhaps regard for some good qualities.

I forget who told me that Mr. T. should once upon a time have asked how a certain gentleman, whose name has slipped through my memory, could possibly be a poet; as he had never once seen a hill.—Now I apprehend that Mr. T. must have been misinformed here; for I remember to have met the very gentleman in question one Sunday evening, I think it might have been towards June or July, upon the utmost summit of *Constitution Hill*.

One evening, after the rest of the company were gone, that most delightful companion Mr. Q. who *should have died hereafter*, told an acquaintance of mine, that in case he outlived him he would do a friendly office to his memory; and asked him where he would chuse to have his bust set up. *Any where*, replied the other, after
 thanking

thanking Mr. Q. for the great honour he intended him, *but in Westminster Abbey.*

To come to an end with anecdotes of this kind ; one who had published some things with tolerable success, told me, that his having past for a poet, had done him more mischief, than any sensible person could easily conceive ; but at the same time he could not help owning, that it had oftener than once procured him the honour of a bow in passing along the Strand or Fleetstreet, from a gentleman with whom he never had any further acquaintance. I have, oftener than once, heard the same person mention one circumstance with particular regret ; that he had never been able to discover or guess amongst all his acquaintances, to whom he was obliged for an elegant present, left at his lodgings some years ago by a gentleman who did not leave his name ; and to whom, of course, he could not express his due acknowledgments for a favour which he highly values.

Sir, says one, this piece, even if all the parts could be well performed, would hardly succeed here — It might perhaps at Paris ; where every

one that goes to the play, is as seriously attentive as the most devout people here are to a Sermon. But in some places natural and unexaggerated representations of life are not felt; the audience must be kept awake with shew, noise and bustle. Here the genteeler part of the company are indeed merely *spectators*; they go to see, and display themselves to one another. And what other reasonable motive can they have?—considering what kind of entertainment the stage for the most part exhibits at present?

I tell you, sir, says another upon a different occasion, this is stupid, indecent, villainous trash—But have you read it?—Yes, above a dozen lines—That's hardly enough; read the whole and then judge.—God forbid!—must I eat a whole saddle of mutton before I have a right to say it is vile rotten stuff?—

That a writer with very middling and even contemptible parts, may do a great deal more mischief than those of the first abilities can do good is too evident.—How much more successful have a parcel of indecent, profligate, lying, inflammatory

tory scribblers been of late years, in stupifying, and brutalising a whole nation; than those elegant, genteel moral writers, who shone about the beginning of this century, were in refining and polishing it!—But it is much easier to set fire to a palace or a temple, than to white-wash a cottage.

Some of those black-guard geniuses are Poets too, God wot!—With crazy, stupid heads and bad hearts; without one spark of imagination; without either sense, versification or language; they are Poets: and the fittest indeed to gain the applause of the vulgar, *great and small, high and low*. For they scribble just such trash as any of the rabble would that could scribble at all. Their works are truly *adapted to the meanest capacities*. Their poetry is the dullest prose spurr'd up into an awkward hobbling Afs-trot. Quite opposite to Orpheus, and those *real* poets whose moral Harmony first humanized the woodland savages, and tamed them into social life; these nightingales of Newgate, these black swans of Fleet-ditch, these infernal Screech-owls, sing nothing but songs of discord and sedition, and treason. But not all the rage and fury of the most rancourous hearts, can

rouse the poetical impotence of those Bards, to any thing above the infipidity of flat unmannerly abuse; which they and their admirers call satire. However, they cannot last long. One may venture to prophecy a short life, and an infamous memory to the stupid ditties of all such Poets; and it is an indisputable truth that no Muse ever yet dwelt in the breast of a scoundrel.

Several of these detached Sentences and Reveries, were set down as materials for a poetical satire; but as the general run of readers here don't understand verse, except it is so stupid as none but a muse-bit blockhead can possibly write, it is saving some needless pains to send them out in their present shape. So let them go: and if our noble masters the Mobility don't relish them, so much the better. They are the more likely to procure the approbation of those few judges to whose praise alone one would chuse to aspire.

A
P L A N
O F A
D E D I C A T I O N.

The late Mr. Cibber address'd the Apology
for his Life *to a certain Gentleman* ; whereas
I LANCELOT TEMPLE presume to address
my SKETCHES

To an uncertain Gentleman.

S I R,

I Humbly beg leave to lay the following sheets
at your noble and magnificent feet. In an age
where scarce any thing but false genius, and the
most impudent quackery in every shape, meets
with encouragement, I appeal to *you*, whom I
have always deemed * *the consummate judge of lite-*

* This compliment was made, several years ago, by a writer
of uncommon genius and abilities, in a Dedication to a certain
distinguished personage ; though some say it has never yet ap-
peared upon what foundation.

vary merit : and I fly in a fluttering hurry to your *protection*. It would offend your modesty, Sir, should I give way to the enthusiasm with which I have constantly admired your amiable behaviour in private life ; in the various characters of son, father, brother, husband, uncle, cousin, lover, friend, debtor, creditor, master, &c. &c. together with your † *superlative powers of charming in conversation*.—But good God with what superior *brilliancy* you shine the * *Cynosure* of state, to guide its weather-beaten hulk to the port of safety and tranquillity !—To your wise, able, frugal, and most strictly economical conduct, throughout the operations of a needless and pernicious war, which to be sure you found unavoidable, it is chiefly owing that your country makes at present such a figure as astonishes all its neighbours. The raging flames of Vesuvius, are a paltry, black-guard, patriotic illumination, compared to its lustre.—You shine, Sir, equally in peace. To your noble perseverance and obstinacy in the cause of liberty and religion, this island owes the firm,

† This is one of many news-paper compliments which I am *credibly informed* some *Patriots* from day to day have sily made to themselves, with great success, amongst a parcel of blind, ignorant, credulous people, who never will learn to smell a rat, but where there is none.

* The star called the Dog's Tail,

steady,

steady, manly, administration of its government, not less wise than virtuous; and the capital of your country ought particularly to thank you for the present state of its incomparable police. The nice discernment too, and the distinguishing taste you have shewn in patronizing Genius in all its variety of shapes, is none of your smallest excellencies.—But I beg pardon, Sir: for I am sure you would never forgive me if I should attempt to violate your delicacy with any thing so fulsome as bare-faced praise.—Your virtues, Sir, and your fine qualities, are innumerable and beyond all expression. I could go further; but it would be invidious to say, that in an age most contemptibly weak, and most shockingly wicked, you stand almost alone to support the dignity of human nature.

But as I know, Sir, you despise every thing that looks like flattery; and are too delicate to bear even the justest praise with any degree of patience: to convince you, Sir, that after all this appearance of compliment I am no flatterer; and to shew you the sincerity of my friendship (begging pardon, my most noble and sublime Patron, for the familiarity of the word)—As a sudden squall

of

of praise may easily overset a vessel that perhaps carries more sail than ballast ; and, to shift from one metaphor to another, as I should be sorry to give you such an over-dose of a sweet poison as might drive you out of your senses, and make you expose yourself stark naked through the whole town, as mad as any king who holds his residence at either of the palaces in Moorfields ; I must be so plain as to tell you, Sir, that I do *not* as an author solicit your *protection*.—Bless your dear sweet *protection* !—If you have any secret to protect stupid writing from the contempt of good judges, keep up your *protection* for some other occasion. It is not impossible that you may, one time or another, be smit with the vanity of turning author yourself. It might happen next moon ; if it was not for *Arthur's* or *New-market*.

But shall I at last fairly and honestly present you with a peep of the cloven foot from under the long black gown of dissimulation and hypocrisy !—You shall have it at once, without the least ceremony—Bless me, did you think me in earnest all this time !—Are you so slow of apprehension, my noble Patron, as not to perceive that the high
praises

praises with which I have at last in a whimsical fit taken it into my head to tickle your ear, are nothing but mere rascally compliments, without the least particle of sincerity?—Is your vanity so irrecoverably blind, as to make it necessary to tell you, that all this is nothing but an exercise in the thriving art of adulation; very fairly practised upon one who has so long fed *me* with the delicious repast of flattery.—For which I have been near the eighth part of a century over head and ears in your debt; and now endeavour to pay you my arrears at once in your own counters—Mean time I have the *honour* to be with the most profound respect and esteem, and the most inviolable attachment,

Sir,

Your most faithful

and *superlatively* devoted

humble servant,

LANCELOT TEMPLE,

THE END.